History and Social Science:

An Inquiry-based Reader

Class Seven

National Curriculum and Textbook Board, Bangladesh

ইন্দিরা গান্ধী
ভারতের প্রধানমন্ত্রী

জেনারেল স্যাম মানেকশ
ভারতীয় সেনাবাহিনী প্রধান

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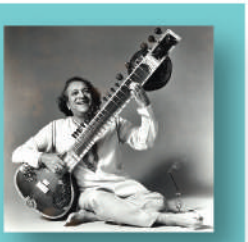

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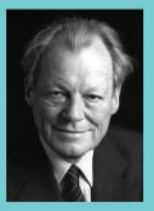

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অস্ট্রেলিয়ান, বীর প্রতীক খেতাব প্রাপ্ত
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History and Social Science
An Inquiry-based Reader

Class Seven

Experimental version

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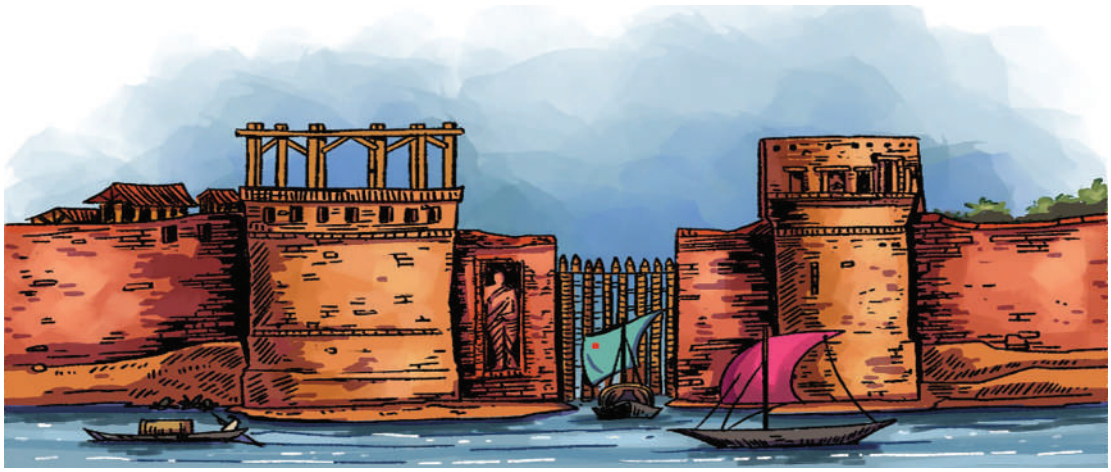

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Preface

In this ever-changing world, the concept of livelihood is altering every moment. The advancement of technology, in accordance with knowledge and skill, has accelerated the pace of change. There is no alternative to adapting to this fast changing world. The reason is, the development of technology is at its zenith compared to any time in the human history. In the fourth industrial revolution era, the advancement of artificial intelligence has brought a drastic change in our employment and lifestyles and this will make the relationship among people more and more intimate. Varied employment opportunities will be created in near future which we cannot even predict at this moment. We need to take preparation right now so that we can adapt ourselves to that upcoming future.

Although a huge economic development has taken place throughout the world, the problems of climate change, air pollution, migrations and ethnic violence have become much more intense than before. The epidemics like COVID 19 has appeared and obstructed the normal lifestyle and economic growth of the world. Different challenges and opportunities have been added to our daily life.

Standing on the verge of these challenges and possibilities, implementation of sustainable and effective solutions is required for the transformation of our large population into a resource. It entails global citizens with knowledge, skill, values, vision, positive attitude, sensitivity, capability to adapt, humanity and patriotism. Amidst all these, Bangladesh has graduated into a developing nation from the underdeveloped periphery and is continuously trying to achieve the desired goals in order to become a developed country by 2041. Education is one of the pivotal instruments to attain the goals and there is no alternative to the modernization of our education system. Developing an effective and updated curriculum has become crucial for this modernization.

Developing and revising the curriculum is a regular and vital activity of National Curriculum and Textbook Board. The last revision of the curriculum was done in 2012. Since then, a lot of time has passed. The necessity of curriculum revision and development has emerged. For this purpose, various research and technical exercises were conducted under the supervision of NCTB during the year 2017 to 2019 to analyze the prevalent situation of education and assess the learning needs. Based on the researches and technical exercises, a competency-based incessant curriculum from K-12 has been developed to create a competent generation to survive in the new world situation.

In the light of the competency based curriculum, the textbooks have been prepared for all streams (General, Madrasah and Vocational) of learners for grade VII. The authentic experience driven contents of this textbook were developed in such a way that teaching learning becomes comprehensible and full of merriment. This will connect textbooks with various life related phenomenon and events that are constantly taking place around us. We hope that learning will be profound and life-long now.

Issues like gender, ethnicity, religion, caste, the disadvantaged and students with special needs have been taken into special consideration while developing the textbook. I would like to thank all who have put their best efforts in writing, editing, illustrating and publishing the textbook.

If any one finds any errors or inconsistencies in this experimental version and has any suggestions for improving its quality, we kindly ask them to let us know.

Professor Md. Farhadul Islam
Chairman
National Curriculum and Textbook Board, Bangladesh

Introduction

Welcome to the new class in the new academic year. Congratulations to you!

We are waiting for you with a new learning approach. In this new approach, you do not have to run after examinations and good marks any longer. You do not have to just know the probable questions for examinations and spend time looking for the answers. From now on, it is not your principal duty to memorise answers. Your parents also do not have to worry about effective tutors, coaching centers, guidebooks, your exams and question papers. There will be no need to spend a lot of money for nothing.

We know that every one of you has a fresh mind and a very active brain. You have not only the power of imagination but also sharp intellect with which you discover different ways of thinking. All of you are born with some other faculties like the mind and brain. We want to talk about these in particular. We are talking about human senses. You have already known that we all have five special organs – eyes, ears, nose, tongue and skin. These organs function as the senses. We see with the eyes and this power is called eyesight while the organ is called visual sensory organ. Similarly, we hear with the ears and these are auditory organs. We smell with the nose which is the olfactory organ. We taste with the tongue and it is the gustatory organ. We feel touches with the skin and it is the tactile organ. They help us to recognize, understand and know something. This is why these senses are very important.

Together with all these assets each of you have –

Perpetual vitality

Limitless curiosity

Immense ability to enjoy, and

A natural tendency to wonder.

Modern educational specialists believe that the stress of examinations and memorization of answers hinders the development of these natural abilities. Rather, students need to use these abilities for learning new things, and this only can give good results.

You are surely getting the notion about your own work after hearing these views. Of course, you are going to enjoy a lot of freedom in this system. However, do not forget that you have to take responsibility to enjoy your freedom. After all, study is your own job; it is for yourself. You will do your own work; that is a very good thing.

The reality is, when you succeed in something, you can understand how much joy it brings. Therefore, learning in the new way will be a joyful journey, an expedition. In Rabindranath's songs, we find a joyous melody of a journey. Education is the joyous song of an expedition that continues while you walk along humming a melody.

You have just enrolled in Class Seven. You have gained experience from lessons in Class Six. Many of the lessons in the new class will be new, with many things unknown. This journey will be like an expedition for the unknown and new things. You will know, learn and do a lot while overcoming the challenges on the way. You will get endless joy as well.

This does not require any additional cost. It is because you have your own mighty tools in your arsenal to meet challenges – curiosity, wonder, vitality, and the ability to be joyful. The senses play a supportive role in this process. The fun is that these are not like money – instead of being spent, these always grow. These are the resources of your mind and so the more you practice, the more they will shine, the more efficient they will be. Moreover, these will inspire you to uncover new abilities. Intellect is the first to call. You have to use your own intellect; you have to think. You need logic to think right. This is an area for practice – if you cultivate intellect, it will increase. You may have seen that if you prune the branches and leaves of some trees, the trees grow better and give more fruits. You need to sharpen your mind, sharpen your logic. Also, the senses have to be kept alert to increase their abilities.

In this way, you will conquer the unknown. You will keep on spreading light in the darkness, and you will not even notice when many things have been grasped. Let this journey towards victory begin!

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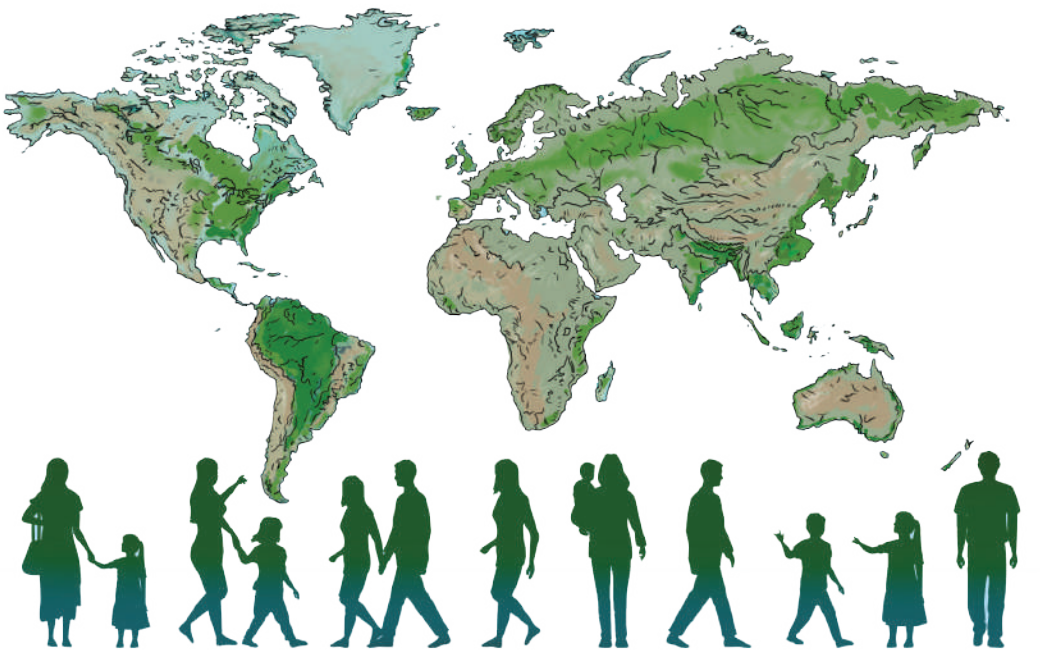


Rises and Falls of Urban Civilization: Transformations in the Lives, Economy and Identity of the People in South Asia

Society, life and settlement in different places: differences and relationships

At present, when we talk about South Asia, we refer to the Indian Subcontinent. You have read about the Pyramids, the city of Ur, various Roman and Greek cities, architecture and societies. Previously, people thought that the Indians were not able to build big cities like the Mesopotamians, Greeks or Egyptians did. It seemed that the Indians did not have the capacity to plan wisely and build roads, houses, buildings and high walls surrounding the cities. Such was the conception about the people of the Indian subcontinent. This notion was shaken in the 1920s. Archaeologists excavated two sites in the north-west of the then British-ruled Indian subcontinent, in present-day Pakistan, where many structures including well-planned roads, houses, baths, granary and other structures were found. They discovered the ruins of two large cities – one was surrounded by walls while the other was lying outside the walls. These two cities were Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro.

Later, the ruins of many other cities of the same period have gradually been found in Gujarat, Haryana, Punjab and Pakistan situated to the north-west of present-day India. Many new sites are still being discovered. Many such sites including Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro are located at the basin of the Indus. That is why the name of this civilization is the Indus civilization. Some people also call this civilization the Harappan civilization after the name of the first discovered archaeological site. Later, it has been found that many cities, small settlements, village-type settlements, trade centres, ports and various industrial production centres of this civilization were extended outside the Indus river basin and across a wider area.

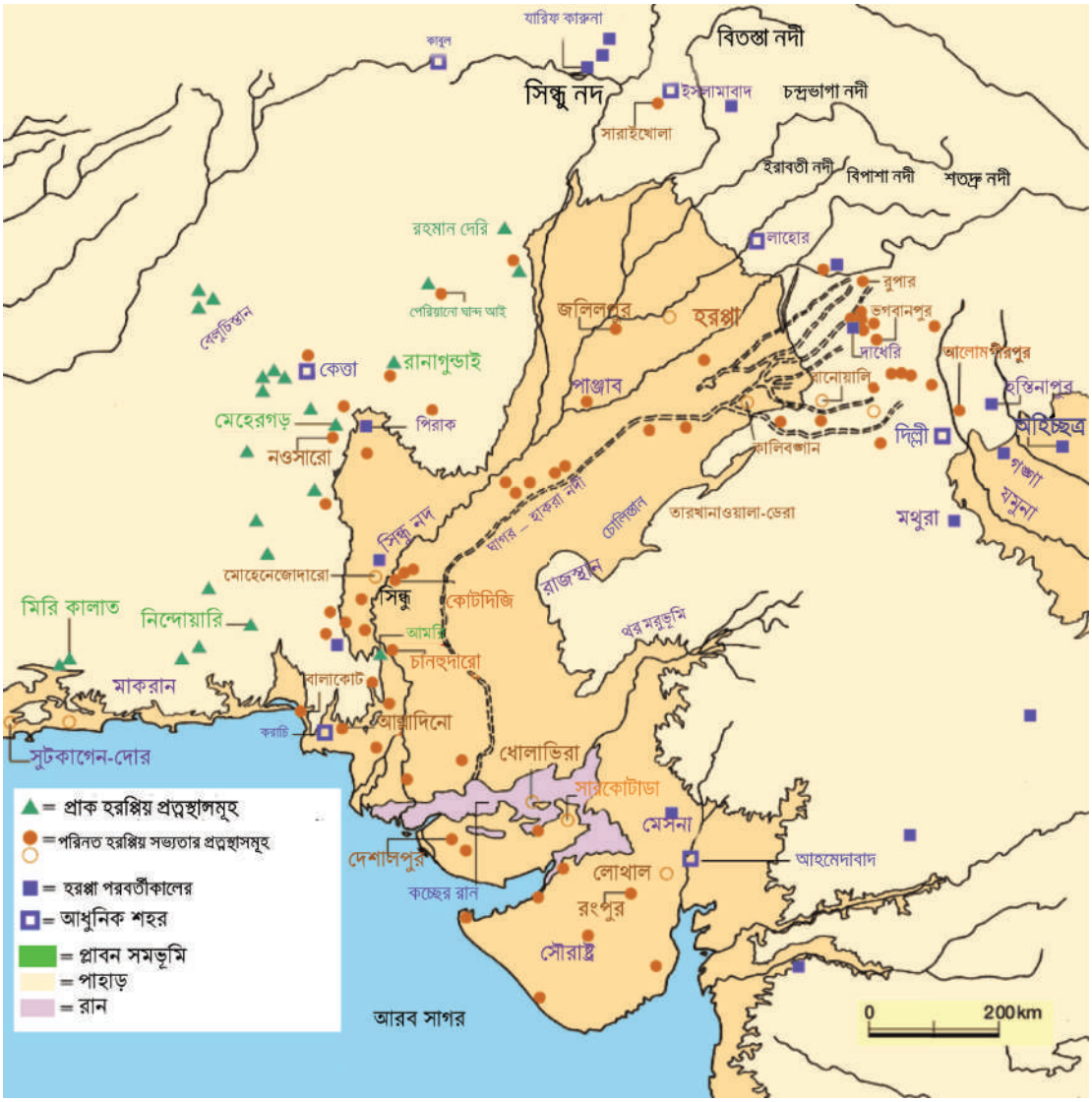
Early researchers have showed that the cities of this newly discovered civilization were established around four thousand and five hundred years ago. Later studies reveal that many settlements gradually evolved from villages or agricultural centres to large cities. This is why the period of Harappan civilization is divided into several phases or cycles.

Two more things you will find interesting

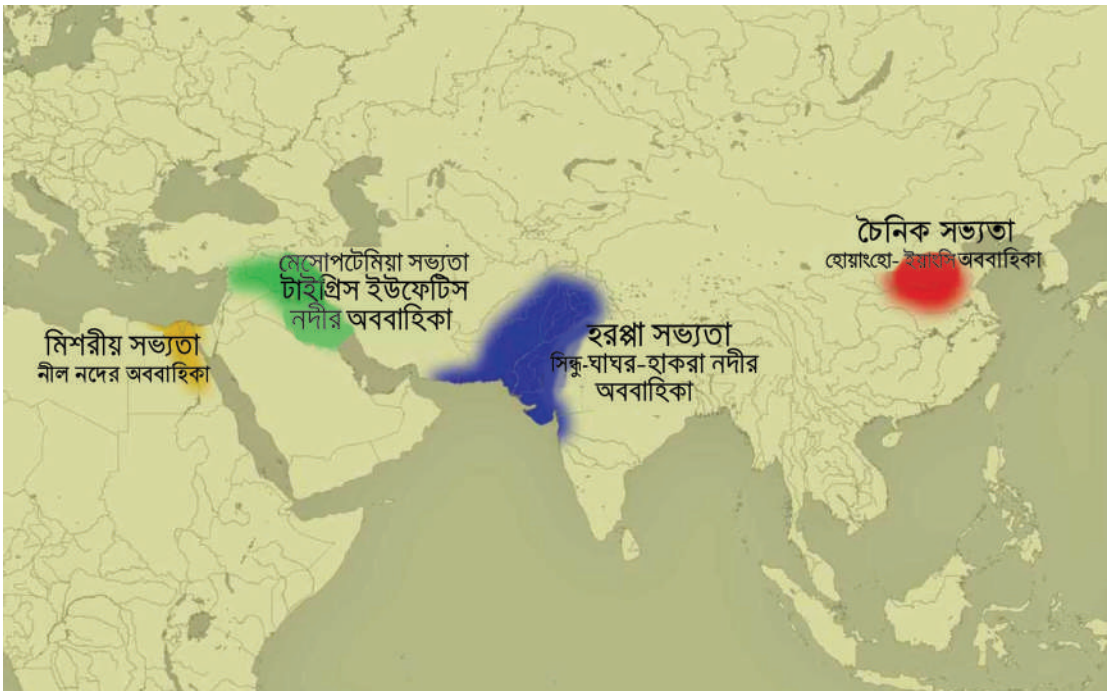
One: The Harappan settlements (cities and other settlements) were located in different geographical settings. It extended from Maharashtra to Uttar Pradesh in India, to the hilly areas of Kashmir, the coast of the Arabian Sea, the arid areas in Afghanistan, the deserts in Rajasthan, the arid, mountainous areas away from rivers in Balochistan and the North West Frontier Province of Pakistan. Different types of centres of this civilization developed in different types of landforms, environment and climate. Therefore, it is not correct to term the Harappan civilization to be a civilization influenced only by the river. Neolithic and pre-Harappan settlements that emerged on the riverine plains played an important role in the establishment and development of this civilization.

The Plains

The Plains are a widespread area of land with gentle slopes. 53% of the total land area of the Earth is the plains. Most people live in the plains as the landform offers most suitable environment for agriculture, communication system, industry and trade etc.



Different city centres and settlements emerged in a vast area during the Harappan civilization. Besides the Indus (Sindhu) basin, there was an expansion of the Harappan civilization in another basin named Ghaggar-Hakra which connected the north-west part of present-day India to the eastern part of Pakistan. There was presence of this civilization in Afghanistan too. The map shows the major city centres and the agriculture-based settlements during the initial phase of the Harappan civilization.



This map shows the distance of Harappa from the contemporary Egyptian, Mesopotamian and Chinese counterparts. Egyptian civilization emerged beside the Nile basin, the Mesopotamian civilization by Tigris-Euphrates basin and the Chinese civilization by the Huwang-He basin.

Extra crops saved from cultivation alone did not contribute to the building of big cities and towns. Domestic and international land and sea trade, industries and other economic activities helped in the development of this civilization. This generated the conditions and causes for the spread of various settlements over large areas of this civilization.

Two: Previously, we learnt that the condition of human beings and human society varies in different places and times. While the cities, people, society and life of the Harappan civilization prevailed in the western and north-western parts of the Indian subcontinent, the people in the north, south and east of the Indian subcontinent were living a different kind of life. The people in these parts of the Indian subcontinent were following different societies and customs. They were used to different kinds of production system. In some places Neolithic, in other places Chalcolithic and in some other places mixed production system, social structure and settlement type prevailed. Human to human relationships were also different. People did not build cities in these places but there were villages. There were some random settlements here and there. The environment, topography (geographical features), presence or absence of food sources determined places for houses, livestock, agricultural land or places for making necessary equipment in the villages or settlements. Therefore, we need to remember that in the north-west part of the Indian subcontinent, approximately 4500 to 5000 years ago, the settlement, life style, food and houses were of one kind. People used to live in planned cities. At the same time, the society, settlement, production and economy were different in the eastern part of the Indian subcontinent, such as our present-day of Bangladesh.

The origin of civilization in India

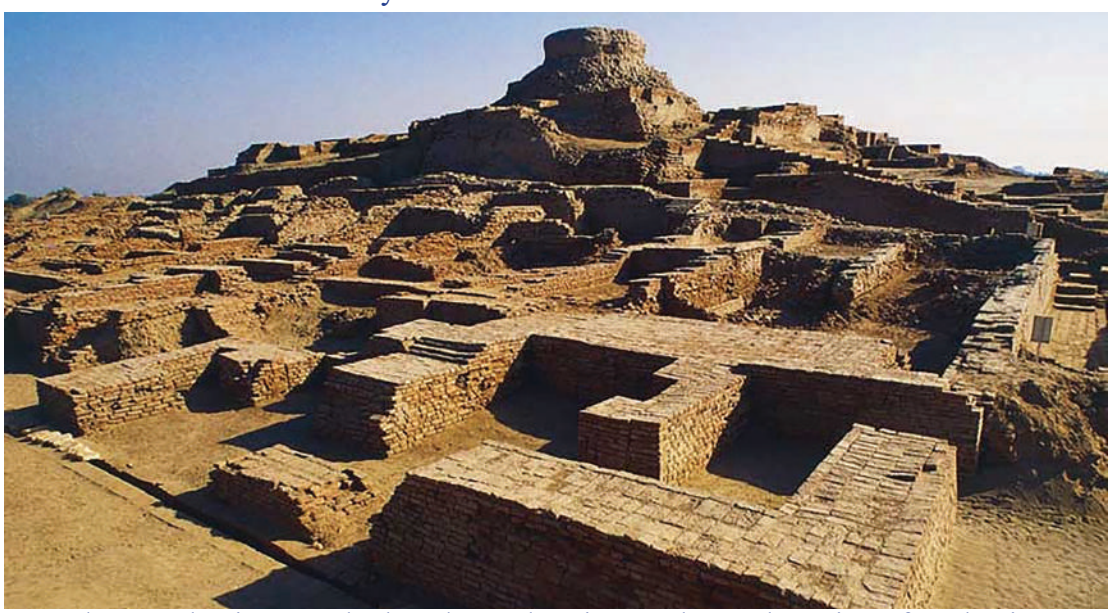
As seen in history, we find that there is rise and growth as well as fall and extinction of the civilizations for sure. Almost every civilization of this world reaches its brink of fall after a long process of continuous development since its emergence. In the history of world civilization, like the Mesopotamian and Egyptian civilizations, the ancient Indus civilization emerged on the banks of the Indus River in the Indian subcontinent. Human civilization entered a new age when humans began to store surplus crops and commodities after meeting their own needs. In the Neolithic Age when people started interchanging their surplus products with those of other people, they introduced the barter system. At one stage, people gradually started the process of buying and selling surplus or additional goods. In this way, urban civilization gradually emerged. In contrast to the simple, rural, agriculture-based life, a more complex, multidimensional, advanced urban life emerged. The most striking examples of these civilizations in South Asia are Harappa, Mohenjo-Daro, Chanhu-Daro, Surkotada and Kalibangan. Like other ancient civilizations of the world, the Harappan civilization began its journey with signs of urban life 4500-4000 years ago by reaping the benefits of the Indus River, but it matured 3600 years ago.

Lots of products like metals and ordinary stones from different areas were brought to Harappa by road, river or sea. Such trade connections significantly contributed to the development of trade and economy of the cities in Harappa.

Let us build a beautiful city

You see that many years ago in the Harappan civilization, people did not build their cities at random. Their urban construction was well planned. Well, if you want to make the city/village where you live more beautiful and planned, then make a list of what you want to change there. Then according to that list, make a model using clay/cork sheet/paper and organize an exhibition with your friends.

How did the city of Mohenjo-Daro look like at that time? This imaginary picture has been created after some analysis.



How does Mohenjo-Daro look today? The picture shows the ruins of Mohenjo-Daro revealed in an archaeological excavation.

Houses and roads were built like square boxes on a chessboard. If you look at the picture of a part of a ruin of an establishment from above, you will notice that houses, roads and drainage system were given much attention in the urban planning. However, at a certain stage, this system did not continue for lack of maintenance. Population growth, waterlogging, inadequate connection with the external world, plague, shortage of food – all these gradually made these cities uninhabitable.

How did gates, drains and houses at Harappa look like? An imaginary depiction of a part of Harappa.

The civilization on the basin of the Indus

The Indus civilization emerged on highlands and deserts and on fertile agricultural lands surrounded by the sea. Recently, traces of the Indus civilization have been discovered in the North-West Frontier Province of Pakistan. Such signs have also been found in Afghanistan. Though these centres of the Indus civilization were near the riverbanks, some centres have also been found near ancient seashores like Balakot. These have also been found on some islands, for example, in Dholavira.

There are evidences of ancient dried up river trail inter-lapped by the Hakra channel in Pakistan and the seasonal river Ghaggar in India. Many centres of the Indus civilization developed in the Ghaggar-Hakra basin. Among them, there were Ruper, Rakhigarhi, Sothi, Kalibangan and Ganwariwala. The settlements of the Harappan civilization spread over a vast area across the Indus river basin from the north-west and west of the Indian subcontinent to northern India It also extended from the foothills of Himalayas to the seas.

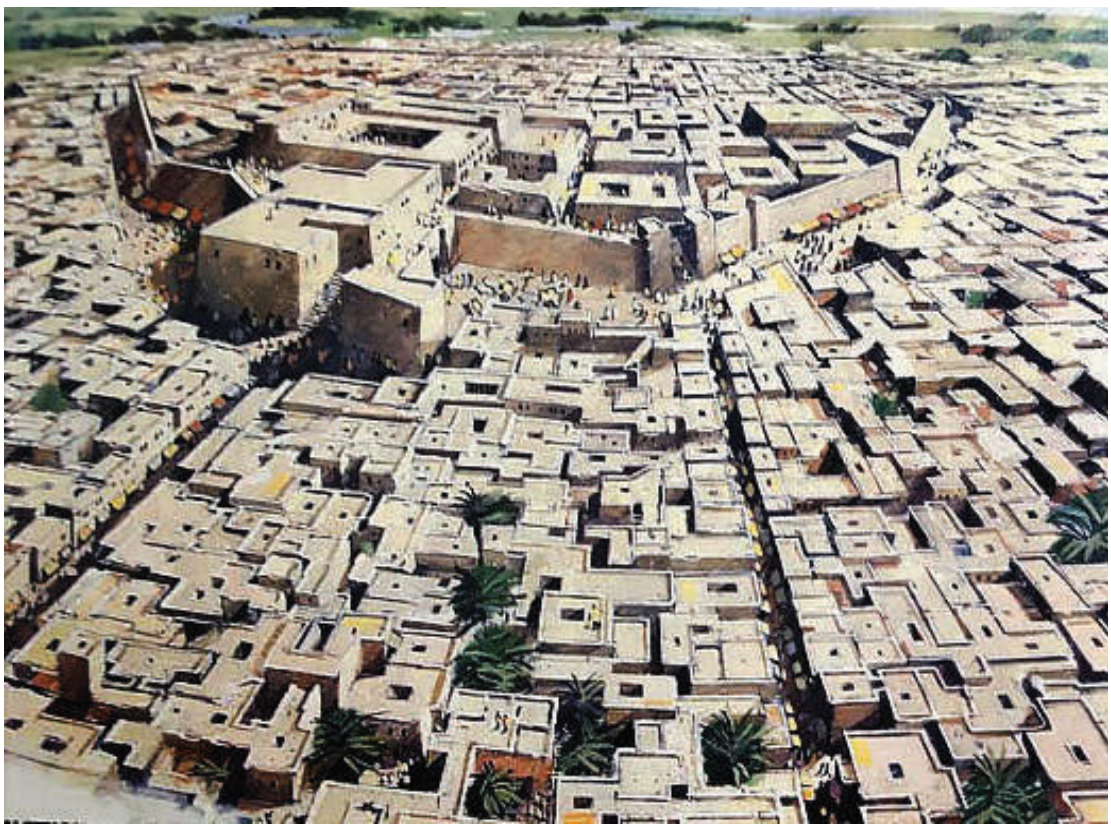
The important archaeological sites of Harappa were Rakhigarhi, Lothal, Harappa, Mohenjo-Daro, Balakot, Nageshwar, Dholavira, Ganawariwala, Kalibangan, Rupar etc. In this wide extended area, traces of 1052 ancient cities and settlements have been found.

Indus River Valley

The Indus River Valley is one of the largest river valleys in the world. The area of this valley is 1165000 square kilometres. The Indus has five tributaries: Bitasta (Jhelum), Bipasha (Beaas), Shatadru (Sutlej), Irabatee (Ravi) and Chandrabhaga (Chenab). The name Punjab originated from the confluence of these five rivers. The tributaries form the northern part of the Indus valley, the Punjab region. However, the Indus flows downstream, ending in a large delta known as the Sindh.

We have come to know about many civilizations above. Let us complete the table below with the information we have got so far:

Name of the civilization	Where it emerged



An imaginary apparent look of a Mohenjo-Daro fort. It shows how the forts and neighbouring roads and houses looked like around 4500 – 4100 years ago at Mohenjo-Daro. You must have seen a chessboard. The houses and the roads were constructed in such a way that they remained in right angle with each other. The houses were built in square shapes like the square boxes of a chessboard.

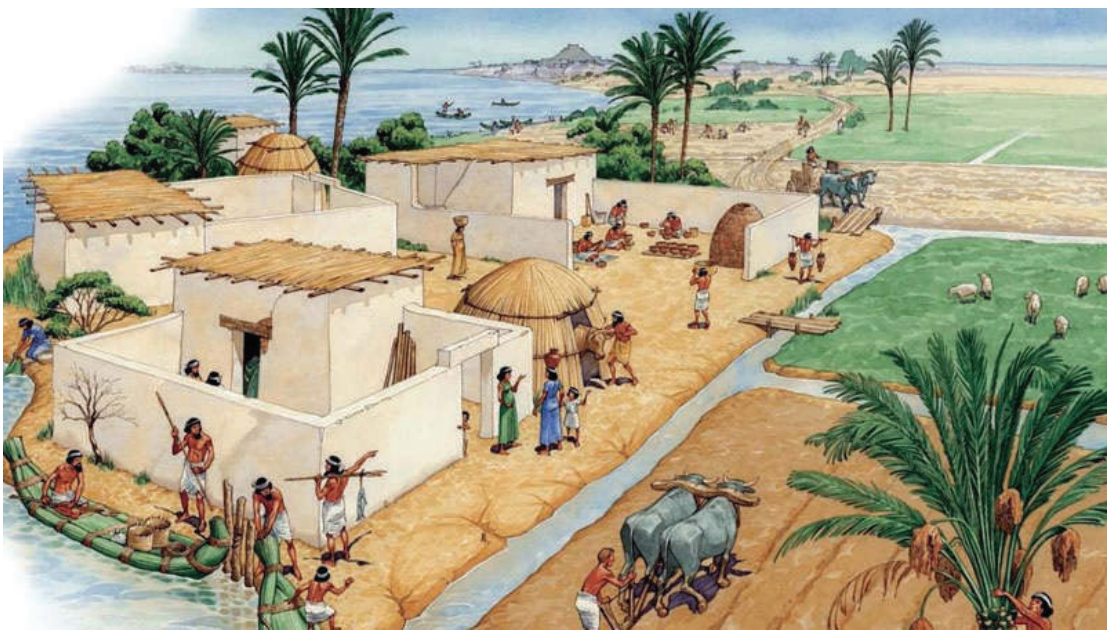
Other Settlements: Ports, Trade Centres, Industrial Production, Rural Settlements, and Human Identity

We have evidences of an aristocratic and advanced technological urban culture in the Indus civilization. These cities were the oldest urban systems in this region. The high standard of urban planning proves that people of this area had adequate knowledge and skills of urban planning. There was also a skilled municipal government. In this system of government, as importance was given to health awareness, attention was given to the citizens' advantages and disadvantages of observing their religious customs also. The Harappan civilization had cities, trade centres and rural settlements, all at the same time. Trade centres and trade routes have been identified based on various artefacts of the Harappan civilization found at different places, the raw materials of that time and geographical locations.

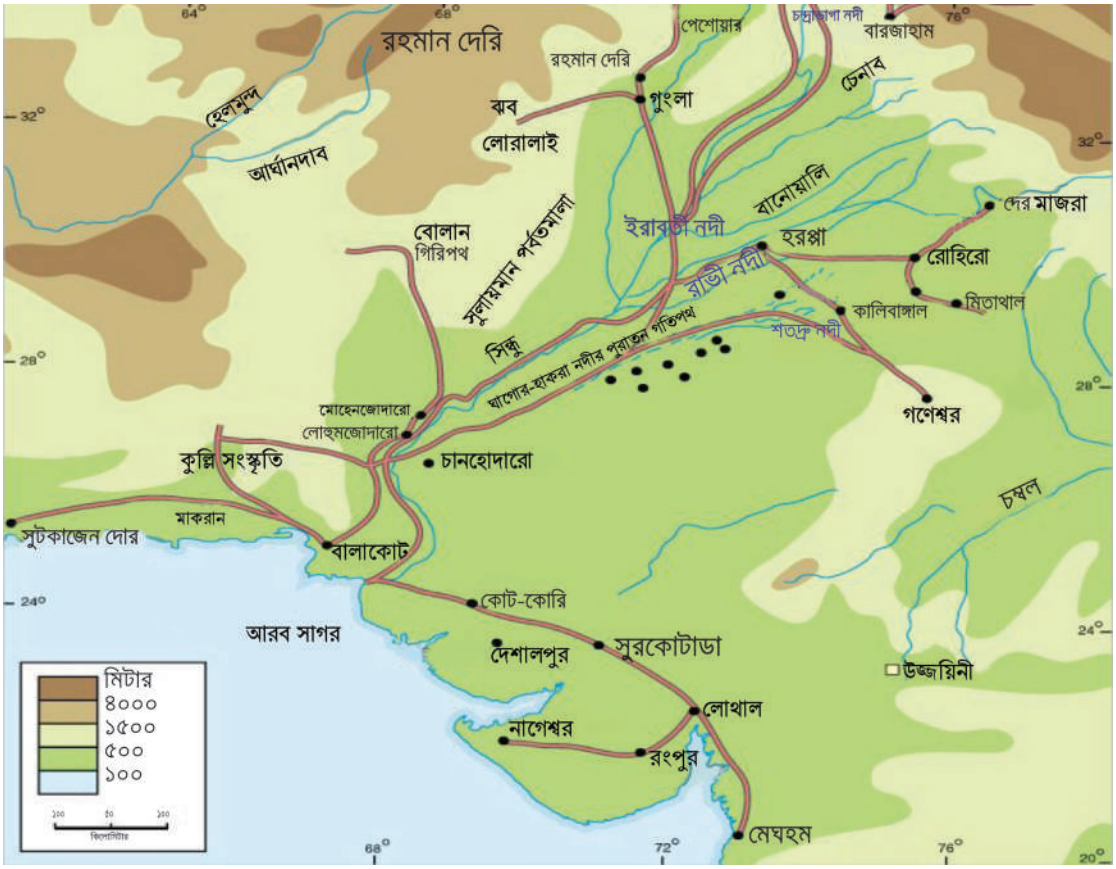
Trade Centre

An important feature of the Harappan civilization was trade and business. In the Harappan civilization, they had both internal and external trades. External trade included relations with Mesopotamia, the Persian Gulf region, Khartuz in Turkmenistan, Hishar in present-day Iran, Susa, the Makran coast and Oman. Inland trade included places such as Baluchistan, Sindh, Rajasthan, Cholistan, Punjab and Gujarat.

Trade was carried out both by land and water routes. It is believed that trade was executed by bullock carts on the land routes and boats and sampans (crescent-shaped boats) were used on the waterways. During the Indus civilization, Lothal, Dholavira, Surkotada, Deshalpur, Nageswara, and Rangpur ports were used for trading. The people of the



How was a settlement near Harappa? How were the houses, cultivation and communication by boat? An imaginary picture of the settlements and activities of the Harappan civilization.



Trade between the different cities of the Harappan civilization was very important. This trade was carried out by river and land. A map of such communication routes.

Harappan civilization conducted trades at Sumerian, Egyptian, and Persian coasts by using these ports.

In the light of the archaeological findings, it is believed that an advanced urban civilization developed in this region. Like the modern urban civilization, signs of planning in the social, economic and religious life have been found as the proof of planned living. The time span of the origin and development of the Harappan civilization is divided into three periods:

Early Harappan Period

(3500-2600 BCE)

Mature Harappan Period

(2600-1900 BCE)

Late Harappan Period

(1900/1700 BCE to the remaining time)

Early Harappan Period

The Early Harappan Irrawaddy Period, named after the nearby Irrawaddy (Iraboti) river, dates from 3300 BCE to 2800 BCE. It was associated with the Hakra phase in the Hakra-Ghaggar river valley to the west.

Evidences of rural cultural heritage of the fully advanced phase have been found in Pakistan's Rehman Dheri and Aamri. Kot Diji (Harappa two) was the representative of the fully advanced Harappan period. At this stage, a major centre of central authority existed and citizens' standard of living was gradually improving as well. A city of this type has also been found at Kalibangan on the banks of the Hakra river in India.

The people of this period had trade relations with other regional civilizations. Lapis Lazuli and other materials for production of jewels were imported from a distance. The village dwellers used to cultivate peas, sesame, dates and cotton. During this time, villagers started to domesticate buffaloes. By 2600 BCE, Harappa had become a large urban centre. This timespan marked the beginning of the Mature Harappan Civilization.

Mature Harappan Period

By 2600 BCE, ancient Harappan citizens had built more than one large city. Some instances of those cities were Harappa, Gonwariwala and Mohenjo-Daro of modern Pakistan and India's Dholavira, Kalibangan, Rakhigarhi, Ruper and Lothal etc. In total, 1,052 ancient cities and settlements have been found in the basins of the Indus and its tributaries.

Features of Harappan civilization

Urban Planning: Considering the structural patterns of Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro, it is assumed that the people of this civilization abandoned the rural lifestyle and established a well-planned city life. The oldest urban planning in the ancient world has been revealed in Harappa-Mahendojaro urban planning.

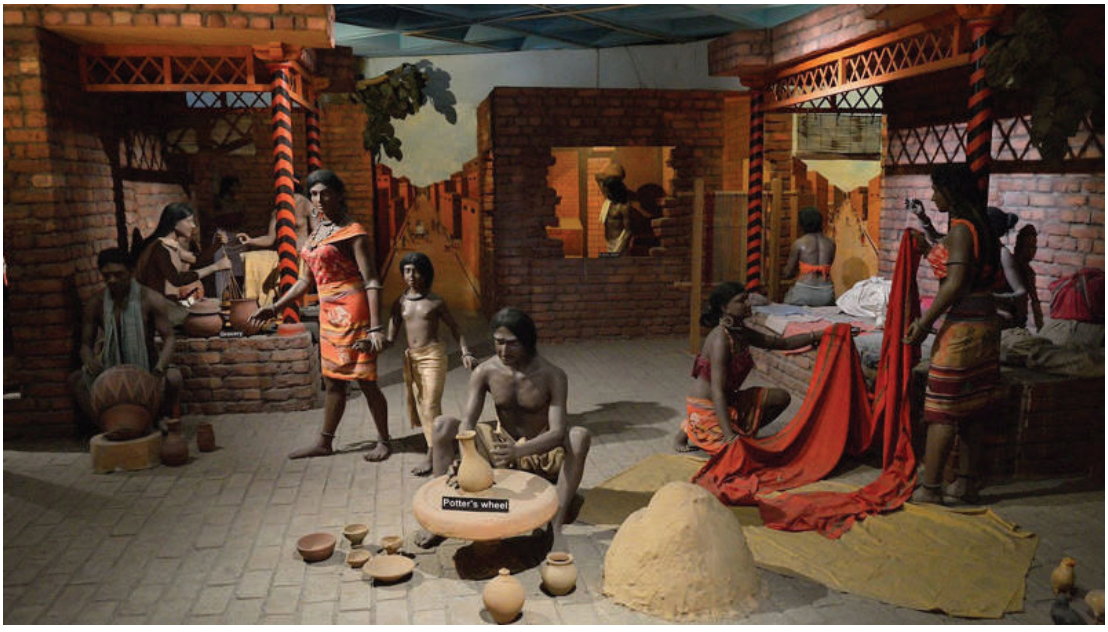
A. Road: All the roads were straight in Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro civilizations. The main road was 35 feet wide. The narrowest one was 10 feet wide. In addition, the small alleys were 5 feet wide. In building different roads, they maintained these measurements.

B. Water supply: The administrators of Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro dug wells to supply water for the citizens. Many houses also had wells in front of their yards.

C. Sewerage System: To keep the city neat and clean, the urban planners built an underground sewerage system. In it, we have found personal and collective sewerage systems. No other ancient civilization had such modern concepts of urbanisation. Besides, every house in the city had a bath for the dwellers and a drainage system for the waste water to go out. These drains were connected to the central sewerage system.

D. Dustbin: The urban authority of Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro employed dustbins in different places of the city to keep the city neat and

Excavation reveals partial findings of human settlements in Harappa.

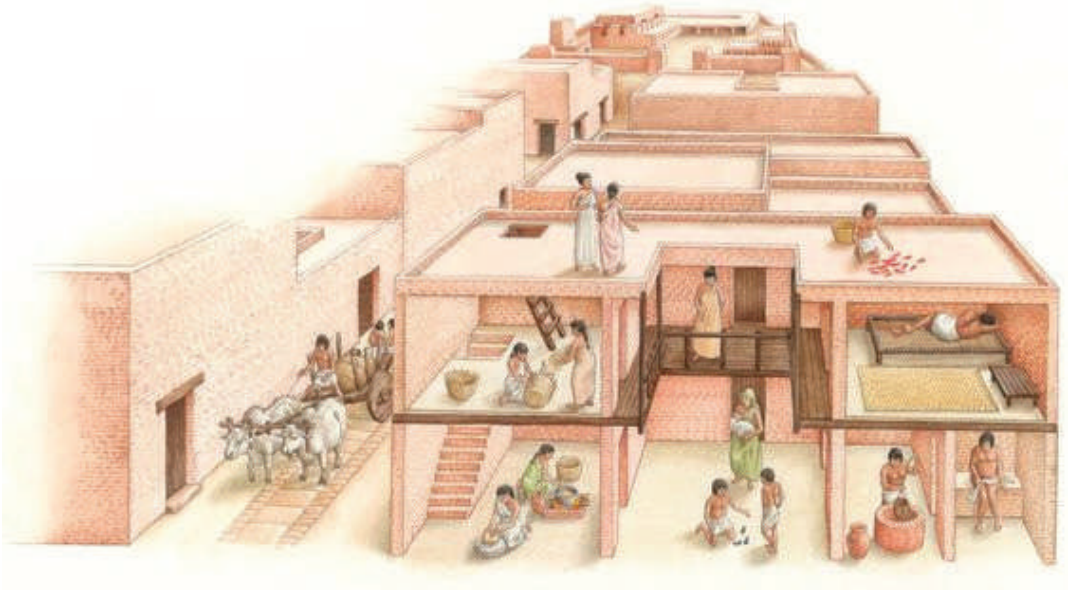


A shop in Harappan civilization in the picture shows shops, pottery and painted cloths.

Picture of a road in Mohenjo-Daro

The famous large bath at Mohenjo-Daro

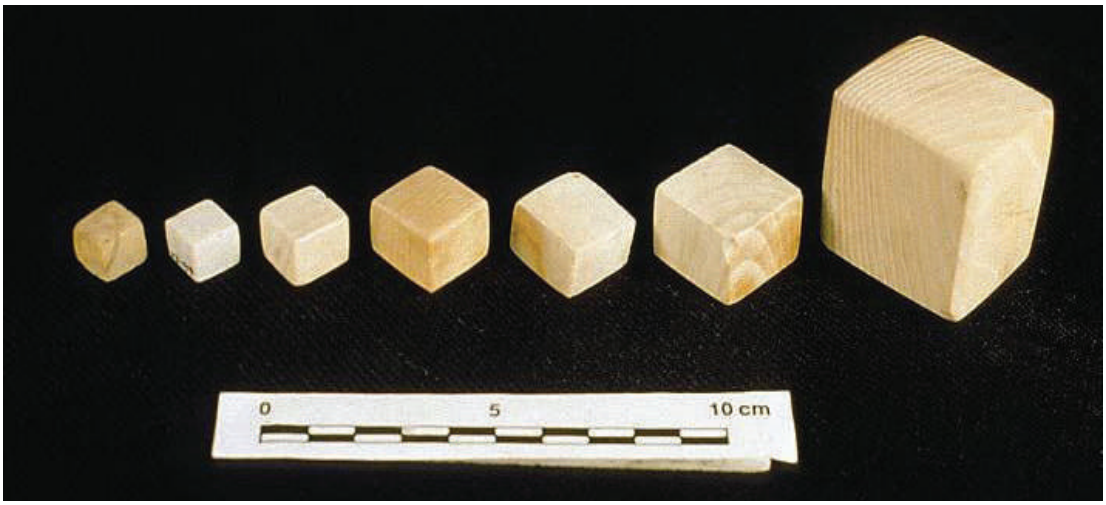
Well planned drainage system



Road and roadside houses at Mohenjo Daro. Imaginary picture based on architectural remains found in excavations

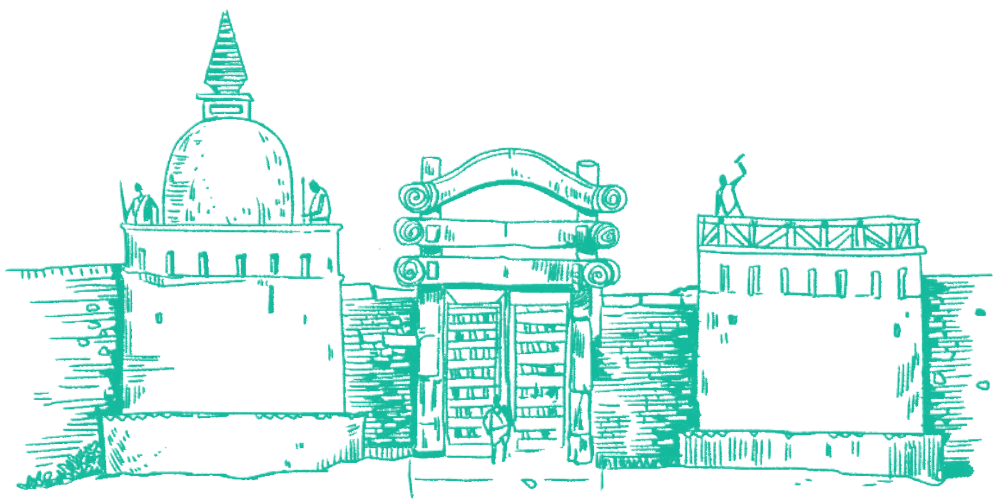
Method of Measurement: For a smooth transaction, the people of Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro invented the method of measurement and weighing.

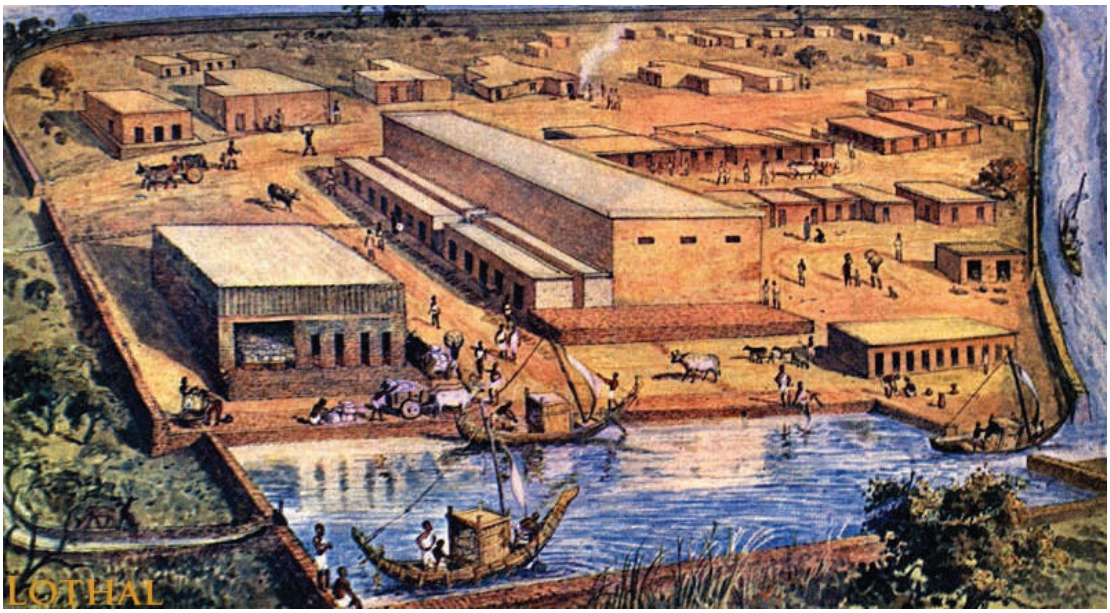
Weighing object: Urban people used batkhara (weighing object) to weigh things. The smallest batkhara weighed 0.875 gramme and the largest batkhara weighed 10.970 gramme.



Batkhara (different types of weighing object to weigh things)

We have gathered some details of Indus and Harappan civilizations through pictures and information. Now we can do an interesting task. We can choose any topic that made these civilizations prominent and then display some relevant points on posters. Let us organise an exhibition.





The city of Lothal beside the Arabian Sea was a sea port of Harappa. An artist imagines the picture.

Changing the Direction of River

If the river changes its direction due to natural or manmade reasons, its called changing the direction of river.

Dholavira was another urban centre. How did it look like? The fortified walled part is shown here.

Indus civilization significantly contributed to the different fields of Arts. The skills of making sculpture, paintings and jewellery industry indicate the richness of Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro. We have found a lot of stone-made and bronze-made sculptures in the Indus civilization. We have added the picture of some stone-made sculptures for your reference here. These sculptures represent their mastery in the art of sculpture. For example, we have found a limestone-made sculpture from Mohenjo-Daro. It was made of soft stone. The sculptors had shown their artistry in reproducing beards, eyes, noses and ears.

Sculpture made from limestone [chief priest or ruler?]

A variety of ornaments including terracotta, cheap beads, metal bracelets, necklaces used by the people of the Harappan civilization.

Moreover, the goldsmiths during the Indus civilization were quite skilled in making jewellery of exquisite design. They used to craft jewellery of gold, silver, copper and bronze. Among the ornaments, noteworthy ones are rings, bangles, nose pins, necklaces, earrings, bracelets etc.

Terracotta animal sculptures found in Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro

Some bronze-made animal sculptures were found in Mohenjo-Daro. Among them, the sculptures of bull and goat were the artistically most enriched. Moreover, the terracotta sculptures are also regarded as notable artefacts of the Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro civilization. Upon the terracotta, carved sculptures of miniature humans and animals were portrayed with expertise.

Among the terracotta-made animal sculptures, the sculpture of cows, raging bulls, buffaloes, dogs, swine, elephants, and monkeys are the notable findings of Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro. All these artefacts were much superior in terms of artistic quality.

Harappan toy ox-cart made of clay

A replica of a boat. This terracotta-made boat shows the shape and type of the boats used for transportation between the different cities and settlements of the Harappan civilization.

Social class

The excavations at Mohenjo-Daro have revealed the fact that people living there were divided into different classes. These were 1. the educated class, 2. warriors, 3. traders and craftsmen and 4. the working class. Priests, physicians, astrologers and magicians were included in the educated class.

Food

Meat of different animals was in the list of food consumed by the city dwellers. For example, cows, goats, pigs, ducks, chickens, turtles etc. were the sources of meat. However, wheat was the staple food. Barley and dates were also favourite to them. They also took milk as food. Although adequate evidences have not been found, it seems that the people of the Indus civilization used to eat vegetables and fruits.

Economic conditions

The people of the Indus civilization developed an extensive form of economic life. Archaeological evidences inform us of the tradition regarding agriculture, industry and trade developed in the Indus valley.

Agriculture

The people of Indus civilization predominantly lived on agriculture. Archaeological evidences suggest that the main agricultural products were wheat, barley and cotton. Oxen were used in agriculture.

Industry

The artisans of the Indus civilization used to make various products. In the metal industry, various weapons and utensils were made of copper and bronze. However, the use of iron was not found in the Indus civilization. The weaving industry also developed during this civilization. They could weave cloths using cotton and wool. Both sun-dried and burnt bricks were used in building constructions. It is believed that many brick kilns were established at Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro. Apart from these, small industry developed as the artisans crafted ivory combs, ivory needles, copper and bronze mirrors with wooden handles, pottery, seals etc.

Another model of a boat. This model gives us an idea about the marine transport and boats used in Harappa.

Clay toy bullock carts found in Harappa

The craft workers of the Indus civilization used to make various small industrial products. Among them were lots of toys. Two-wheeled toy ox-carts made of clay have been found in Harappa. Terracotta and copper gigs (ekkagari) and birds etc. are some other noteworthy craft products of Harappa. Ornamental spherical pottery is considered to be one of the proofs of unmatched technical skills of the Indus civilization.

Trade and commerce

The artisans of the Indus civilization used to make many types of products. The demand for these products was much in India and spread to many countries outside India. As a result, trade relations were established with people from many countries. Evidences of trade relations with Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Gujarat and Kathiawar of India have been found. Metal products, pottery, ornaments etc. found in these regions prove such facts. As part of foreign trade, relations developed with Persia, Afghanistan, Mesopotamia and Egypt.

Rectangular seal

Writing system:

By 1925 CE, researchers have found 2500 seals of Indus civilization. These seals are imprinted with pictographic script. Unfortunately, historians, archaeologists and linguists have not been able to decipher this script yet.

Pottery

In Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro, potters used pottery wheels to create earthenware. Such ornamented earthenware was used for storing water, grains, salt etc. The pots were brightened using red, black and other glaze colours.

Different types of earthenware. Can you guess what they were used for, by looking at their size?

Cemetery

Burial of dead bodies was a common practice in Harappan civilization. Graves with a variety of artefacts have been found at various sites of the Harappan civilization. Many graves and skeletons have been found in a cemetery in the city of Harappa.

The inhabitants of the Harappan civilization used to bury the dead accompanying them with various objects. Many such graves with skeletons have been discovered. By analysing such skeletons, scientists have been able to understand the body structure and features of the inhabitants of that civilization. Scientific study of various remains of the Harappan civilization has proved that its inhabitants were made up of a mixture of local people and people from present-day Iran. They have more in common with the present-day South Indians. Linguists speculate that the inhabitants of the Harappan civilization spoke an early form of Dravidian language. They are called Proto-Dravidian languages. On the other hand, you have already read that people started coming in groups from the steppe grasslands after the decline of the Harappan civilization.

Trade in the Harappan civilization – various types of seals to identify different cities. These seals and the script used on the seals have remained a mystery to archaeologists and historians. There are various explanations for their use.

The gradual collapse of the Harappan civilization and its causes

Based on evidences from various archaeological findings and artefacts discovered from the Indus valley, archaeologists assume that the Harappan civilization developed between 2300 and 1750 BCE. This civilization was quite vigorous in nature. However, we are yet unsure about the exact reason why this lively civilization became extinct. Everyone agrees that this civilization came to an end sometime after 1750 BCE, after a long and magnificent presence of 600 years. Archaeologists, geologists, meteorologists, and historians have expressed different views on the cause of the collapse of this civilization. They have grounded their opinions on facts mixed with their own perspectives. However, no theory has yet offered one unanimous answer to why this glorious civilization finally collapsed. To find out the causes of the extinction of this civilization, we need to keep in mind a few basic things. We need to remember that this civilization existed over a vast area in and outside the Indus valley, and that it did not become extinct in all these areas all at once. Even when one hundred or one hundred and fifty years had passed after the collapse of Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro, this civilization still survived in the Surkotada region. Even after this, this civilization was persisting in quite a poor condition in some parts of Gujarat, Rajasthan and western Uttar Pradesh. It is not that all the centres of this civilization collapsed for the same reason. Not all these centres of civilization had the same reason or context behind their decline. Even if the reason for the decline of some cities or centres was the same, it was not at equal level everywhere. This civilization did not collapse from nowhere in a single day. After a long period of gradual decay, the civilization became barren and was followed by a great catastrophe, which led to the extinction of the civilization.

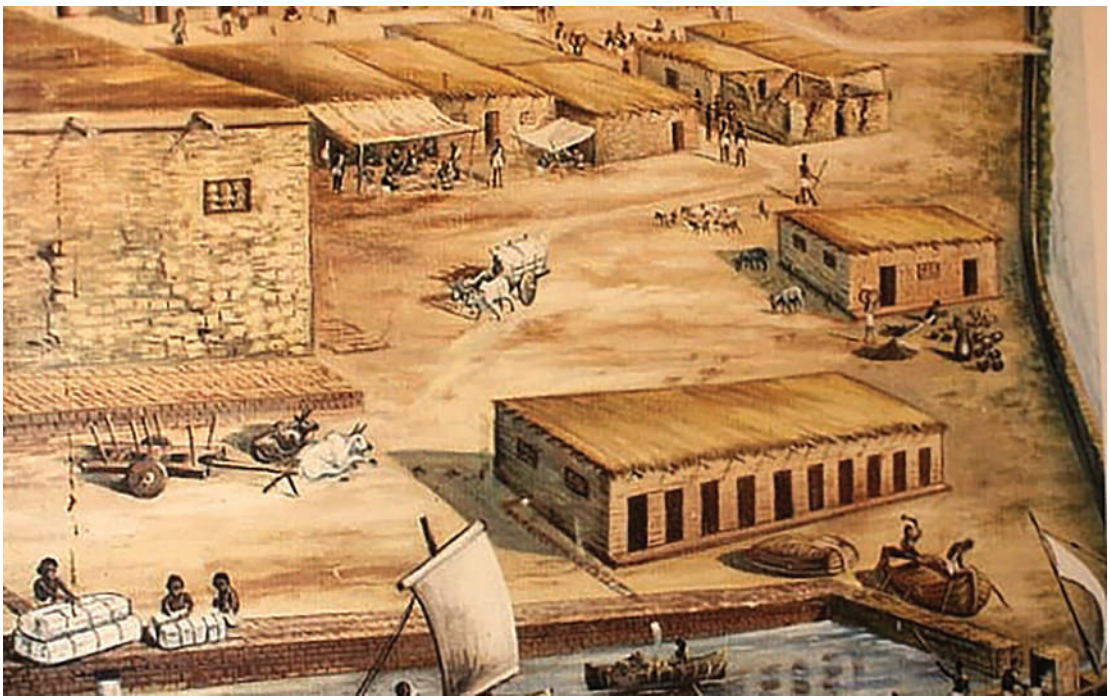
We have learnt so many things about the Indus and Harappan civilizations. Now we can draw pictures of some of the items they used. Let us draw them in the following table.

Topic	Picture
Ornament	
Toys	
Seal	
Pottery/ Earthenware	

The possible causes of the decline of the Harappan civilization can be broadly divided into three categories. These are: 1. natural causes, 2. internal degeneration and 3. other reasons.

1. Natural Causes: Many scholars attribute the decline of the Harappan civilization to various natural causes. These are a) climate change, b) expansion of deserts, c) changes in the course of the river Indus, d) earthquake, e) flood, and f) drought.

2. Internal degeneration: Many scholars blame the internal degeneration of the Harappan civilization for its decline and fall. According to them, internal degeneration paved the way for the collapse of the Harappan civilization. Social and state systems lost discipline; communication and exchange relationships among cities became disorderly; and there was gradual loss of control in society and state. It is noteworthy to mention that the decadence of civic life was more visible in the upper strata though the lower strata were still holding the impression of advanced civic civilization. Houses were encroaching upon the streets; alleys were getting narrower; sewers were getting dirtier; big buildings were turning into human pigeon-holes; and agriculture and trade were deteriorating while technological quality such as in pottery was declining as well.



Historians have depicted an imaginary picture that includes general view of market, water route and transports

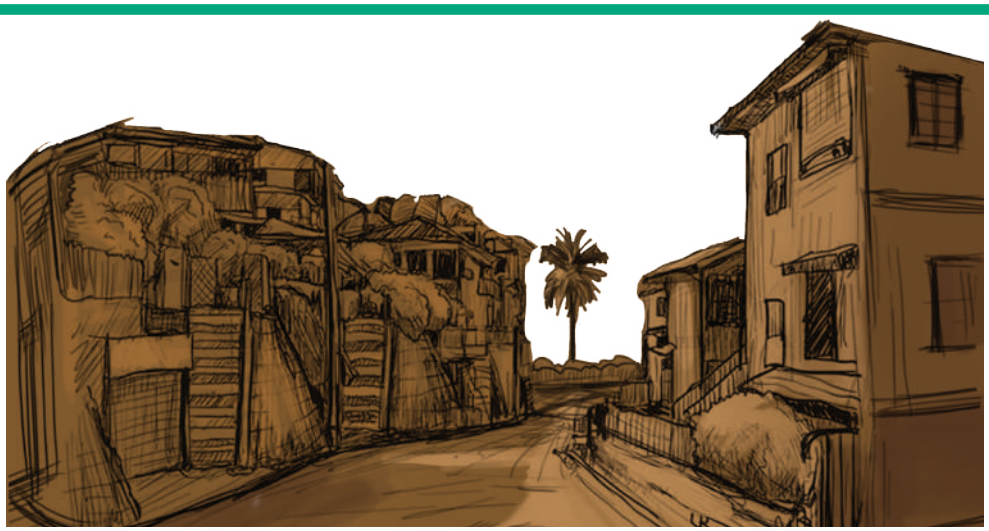
People, societies and settlements in the Indian subcontinent after the Harappan civilization

About 563 post-Harappan settlements have been identified in a region between the Jamuna and the Sutlej (Shatadru). Most of the settlements were small in size and below 5 hectares in area. Cemetery H culture was an important element of these settlements. It was a Bronze Age culture in the northern Punjab region of the Indian subcontinent. It is regarded as a regional form of culture of the late phase of the Harappan civilization. Moreover, a number of graves have also been found in a place between Peshawar and

Chitral valleys beside the Hindu Kush Mountains. These graves are the evidence of the Gandhara grave culture. In the Ganges basin, the culture of ochre coloured pottery of the Bronze Age developed. The use of iron was introduced in the South where various types of monuments made of large stones can be seen. These large structures are known as megaliths. In addition, there are evidences of human settlements using red and black pottery and copper in western India or in Bihar and West Bengal in eastern India. In the central and north India also the use of painted gray clay pots and iron began. After the fall of Harappa, it took 1500- 1800 years to raise another civilization. However, evidences from this period reveal several large settlements of big walls. They were based on the use of agriculture, trade and iron. According to this, the Iron Age started in 1200-1000 BCE (Before the Common Era). So, we cannot say that Harappan civilization was destroyed. Although the cities in the north-west part were abandoned, the settlements somehow continued to exist. In other parts of the country, people brought changes in technology, agriculture and life style. During this period, city-states did not flourish but different tribes, lineage and regional unity were in the rise. Basically, from the grasslands of the Central Asia people migrated to India in large groups. They brought with them new languages, new lifestyle and new technology. A majority of them were nomads and herdsmen. For the next one thousand years after the Harappan civilization, people from the Central Asia mixed with the people of other regions. These people from Central Asia came to be known as the 'Aryan'. They introduced Indo-European languages and family inheritance for power. Various compilations of 'Vedas' including 'Rig-Veda' and other written sources originated during this time of their arrival, assimilation and transformation.

The Vedas

The etymological meaning of the word 'Veda' is 'knowledge'. It is the holy book of Hindu religion. The Holy Vedas are comprised of four volumes titled Rigveda, Samaveda, Yajurveda and Atharvaveda and so the collection is called Samhita (meaning 'a collection'). The Vedas also deal with many topics such as social norms, politics, economy, education, medicine, agriculture, industry etc. That is why the Vedas are also considered a historical document of society, literature, politics and economy.



The Expansion of Empire, Urban States and Diversity: Persistent Changes in Identity, Language and Life

Languages and a new way of writing, changes in society

In the previous chapter, you have learnt about the Harappan civilization. Moreover, you observed how various cultures of the Chalcolithic and the Neolithic Ages continued and new developments occurred after the fall of the Harappan civilization. You have also known that different groups of people have brought their culture, way of life, physical characteristics and language to the Indian subcontinent like waves at different times. This mixed group of people contributed to the development of the Harappan civilization. After the fall of the Harappan civilization, the people there started to migrate in separate groups to the northwest of the Ganga-Jamuna basin, south India and eastern India. Approximately during 2000-1500 BCE and even after that, another large group of people began to enter the Indian subcontinent from the Russia-Ukraine grasslands of central Asia. They called themselves the Aryans. However, the historians believed that the word 'Aryan' did not guarantee any racial, religious, or lifestyle-based supremacy. It does not refer to any particular human race as well. Questions may arise in your mind about which language the people of Harappan civilization spoke and which script they wrote in. In modern days, scholars have been able to read the language and scripts of the Egyptian and Mesopotamian civilizations contemporary to the Harappan civilization. On the contrary, scholars have not been able to use the same procedure so far to understand the language and scripts of the people living in urban centres and other settlements of Harappa. There are many researchers who study the history of languages in many different ways. They are sometimes called historical linguists. At other times, they are also called linguistic archaeologists.

People who came from the grasslands were mainly herdsmen and they were mainly of nomadic communities. They managed to tame horses. They needed less time to travel from one place to another as they used horse and carriage. They did not know cultivation and the same way they could not learn how to build cities for permanent settlement. Their languages were different too. There was no common language for all. Historical linguists believe that different languages have developed due to the mixing of their language with other local languages during their migration to different places. The linguists label these languages under one category. This category is termed as the Indo-European languages.

Migration

Migration is the movement of people from one region to another. It also refers to the arrival of special groups or people from village to city, people's change of place, and absence from their original or permanent home for a few days or many years.

Grassland

Grasslands are vast areas covered by a continuous cover of grasses. It has favourable conditions for the growth of grasses but not for tall plants, especially trees and shrubs.

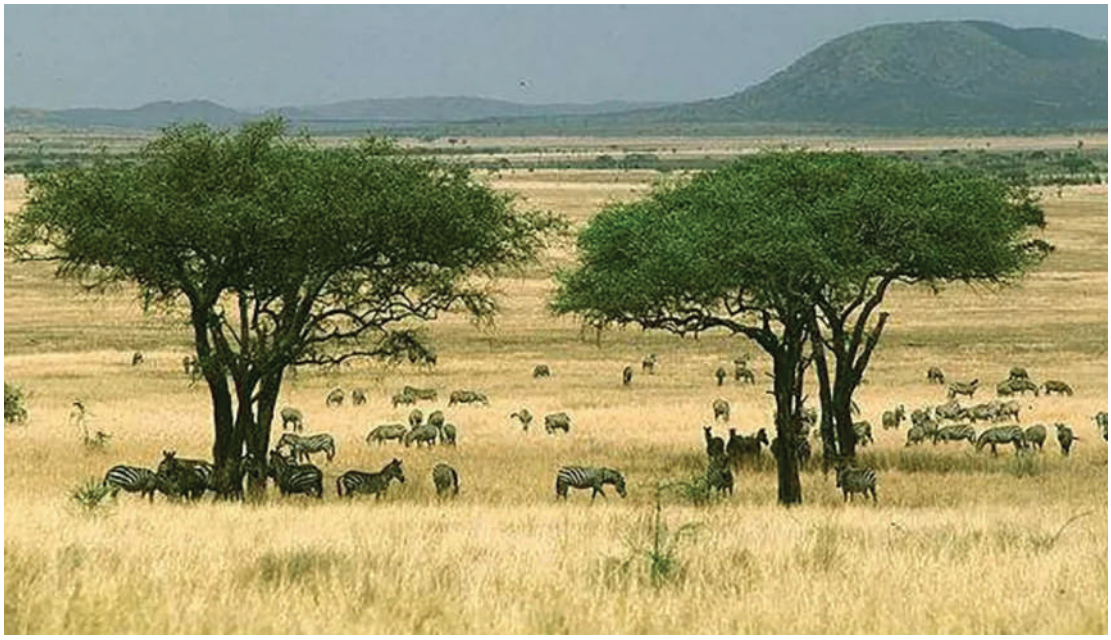
Characteristics:

Various types of grass grow in the grasslands. Usually no trees are seen or can grow in the grasslands. Only a few scattered trees may be found there. The land is usually flat. The grasslands are suitable for feeding the cattle. Suitable soil for cultivation is also available there.

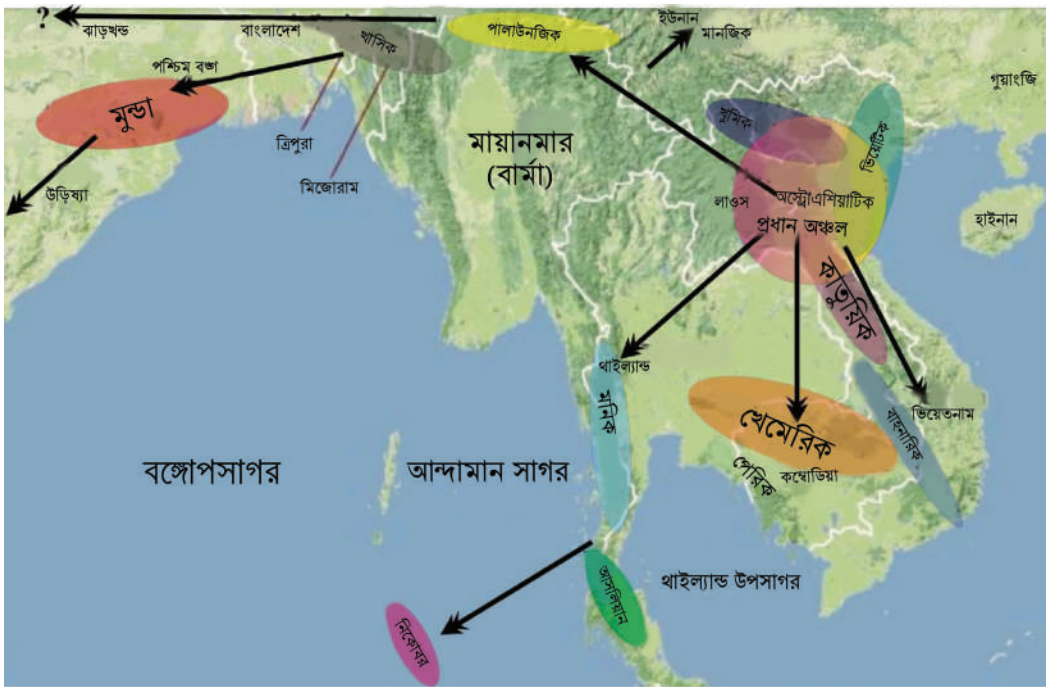
Types of grassland

Tropical grasslands are called the Savanna. Tropical grasslands are found in Africa, India, south-east Asia, Brazil and Australia. The climate in Savanna is extreme in nature. Temperature is high and climate is humid and dry. During the dry season, small amount of rain is found there.

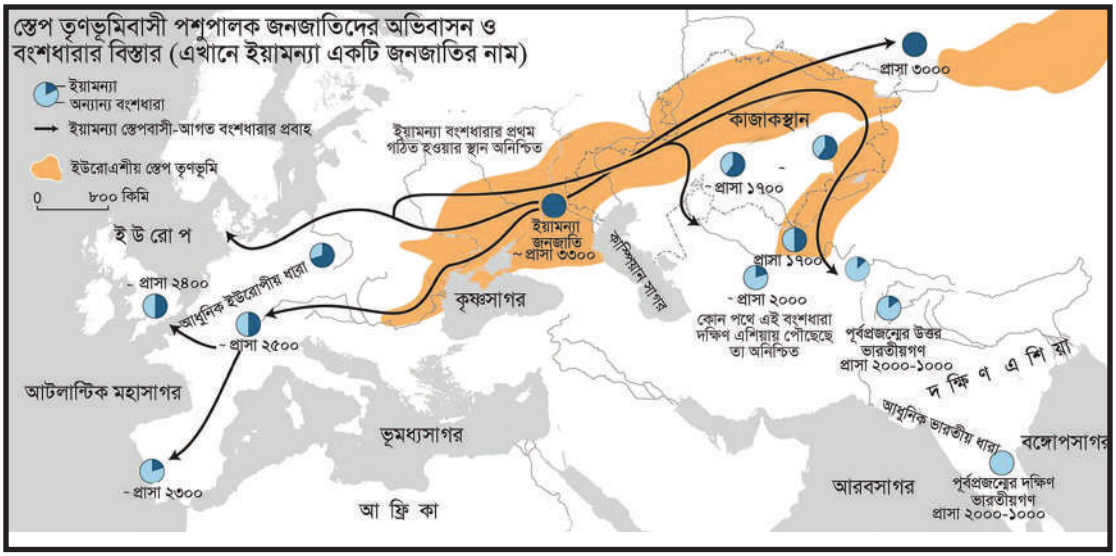
Temperate grasslands have less extreme climate. The Prairies of North America are temperate grasslands. The Pampas in Argentina, Veld of South Africa and Steppes in the central Asia are temperate grasslands. The large rangelands in the south-east corner of Australia are also of the same category.



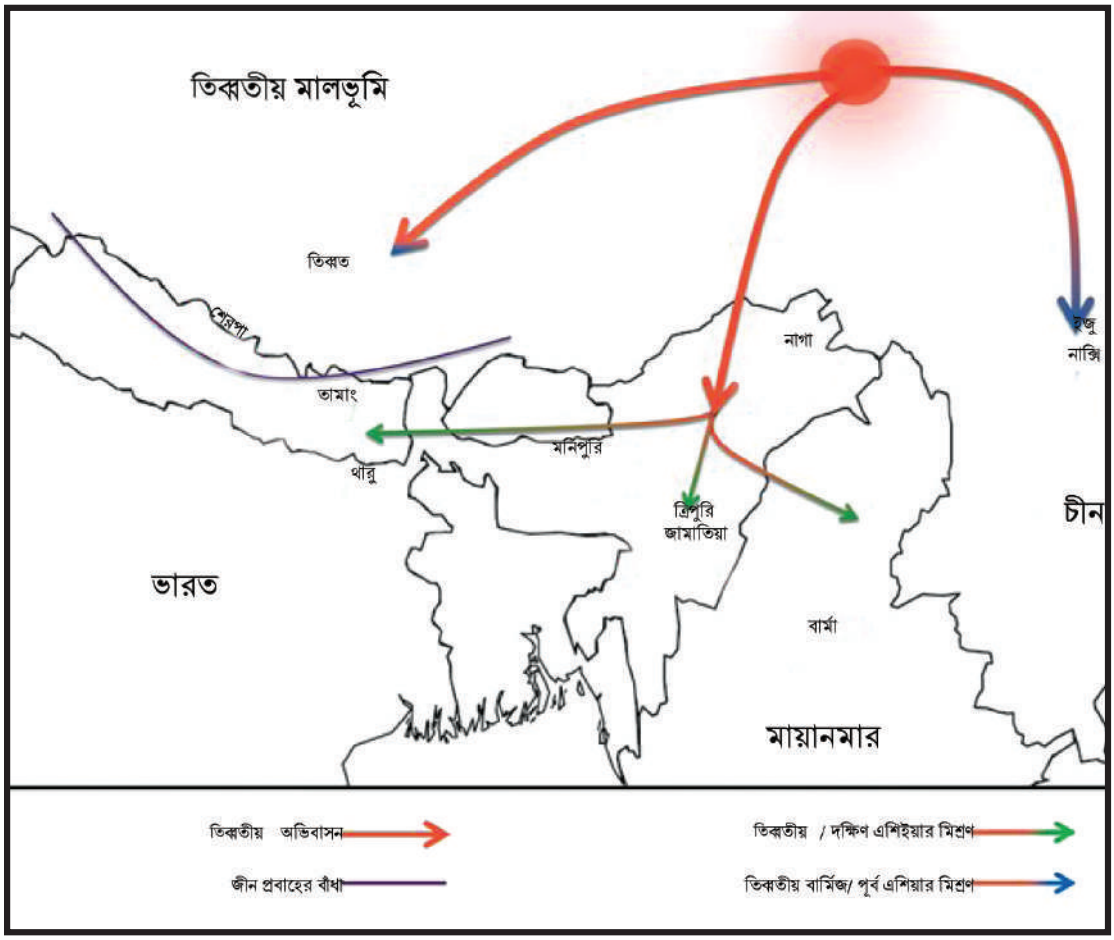
On the other hand, after the decline of the Harappan civilization, the peoples who migrated to South India (especially south of the Vindhya mountains in central India) mixed with the local people to form a language family that has been named the Dravidian language family. Linguists, archaeologists and scientists consider that the people of the Harappan civilization originally spoke a language close to this Dravidian language. Once herdsmen from the grasslands arrived in the Indian subcontinent, they inevitably mixed with the local people. Recent studies have revealed that these groups from the grasslands were mainly male-dominated. After arriving in the Indian subcontinent, they married the local Dravidian speaking women. As a result, their descendants gradually began to speak a mixture of their own language and the languages of the people coming from steppe. The earliest languages spoken by the newcomers were an early form of Sanskrit. The various ritualistic regulations, practiced by them in oral tradition and passed through memorization, began to be recorded later. This written form became some parts of the Rigveda. New rules and regulations were added at different times and thus the Rigveda took its full form in Samhita. Various other Samhita of the Vedas (such as the Sama, Yajurs and Atharva Samhita and the Brahmana, the Upanishad and the Aranyaka associated with each Samhita) were written down at various times after the original edition. Linguists have demonstrated that the differences in the Sanskrit language of the Samhita and other texts from early Sanskrit to the later period show evidence of mixture with Dravidian languages. If we demonstrate one such proof, you will understand it well. Early Sanskrit or other Indo-European languages (e.g. Prakrit) did not have murdhyanya (retroflex) sounds (আমাদের ব্যঞ্জন বর্ণে ট, ঠ, দ, ধ, ণ,ড় আর ঢ় মূর্ধণ্য ধ্বনি, কারণ এগুলো উচ্চারণ করার সময় জিহ্বার আগা উল্টিয়ে মাড়ির গোড়ায় বা মূর্ধায় শক্তভাবে ছুঁতে হয়). On the contrary, these sounds existed in Dravidian languages. So, the use of murdhyanya sounds in Sanskrit started much later. Besides this, many words of Dravidian language are found in the Rigveda. Those words also bear evidence of the mixing of language groups.



The migration route of the Austroasiatic people from South-East Asia



Migration of the tribes (called Yamana) toward different direction from the steppe grassland.



Trends of migration of Tibeto-Burmese language groups from various regions in the north-east to the Indian subcontinent and Bengal region in the west.

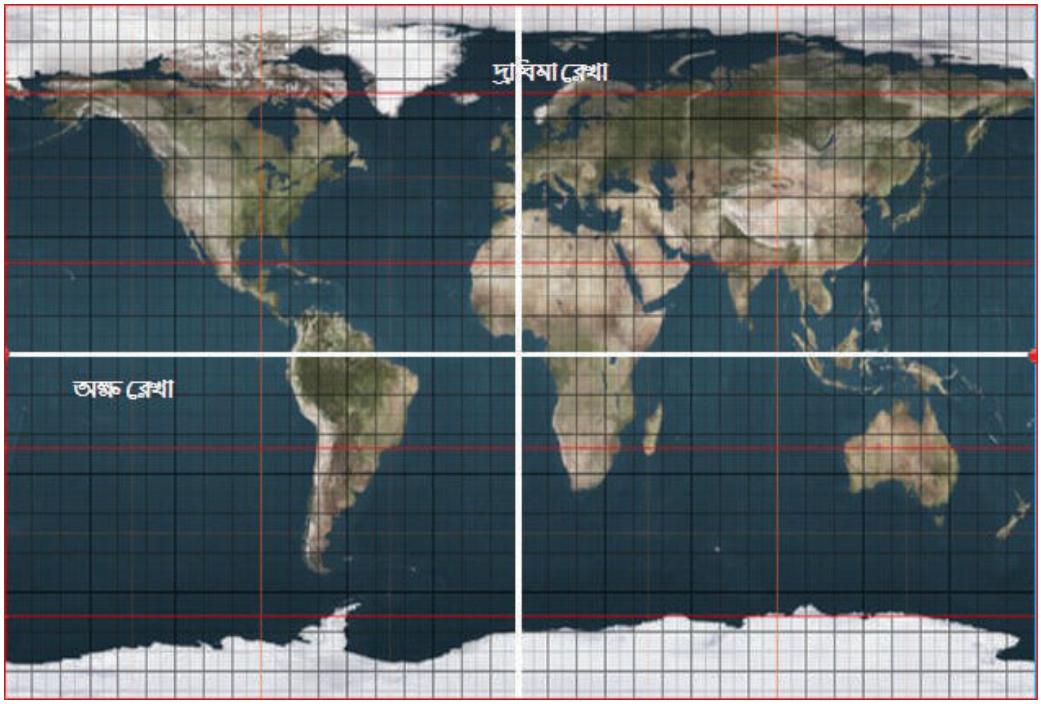
Latitude and longitude on the map

You have observed that people have migrated from one place to another for various needs since ancient times. They have built different settlements and made trade journeys in different directions. In these activities, they needed to determine the directions to follow the right path. Since ancient times, people used to employ different means to know the way. Sometimes they did it by using the location of the Polar Star or some other stars; then came the use of the compass. Nowadays, we can easily find our way using Google Maps or GPS. Do you know how this Google map or GPS works? To know this, we first need to understand a world map or a globe very well.

Our Earth is an amazing planet in the solar system. All the elements necessary for sustaining life are present in the right proportions only on this planet. What can we say about the size of the Earth? Can we understand its size by looking around? It looks like a round disc or plate, doesn't it? Apparently, the earth looks like a plate. It seems that we are on that plate or disk with houses on it. However, the world is not like a plate or a disc. It is round, not flat. It is round but not perfectly round. The Earth is slightly tilted to the north and south.

When we talk about the world map, surely you will think of the globe. Won't you?

You must have seen that there are some imaginary lines up and down, that is, along north-south and sideways, that is, along east-west on the globe. These lines have names. Lines running north-south across the globe are called lines of longitude (draghimarekha) and parallel lines running east-west are called lines of latitude (akkhorekha).



These latitudes and longitudes form a number of roughly rectangular boxes while they intersect each other, don't they? These are like the grids you have seen on graph paper. Just as you can make perfect measurements using grids on graph paper, these grids made of the lines makes it possible to draw a perfect map of the world.

These lines are marked with the unit called 'degree' that you use in geometry to measure angles. Assuming the Equator (bishurekha) to be at 0 degree, with 90 degrees north of the Equator and 90 degrees south of the Equator, we get 180 degrees. Taking the Prime Meridian to be at 0 degree, with 180 degrees east of the Meridian and 180 degrees west of Meridian (mul madhyarekkha), we get 360 degrees. Some of these again have different names. Let us find the names of some important latitudes and longitudes with the help of the globe in the following figure. Let us write them in a table.

অক্ষরেখা

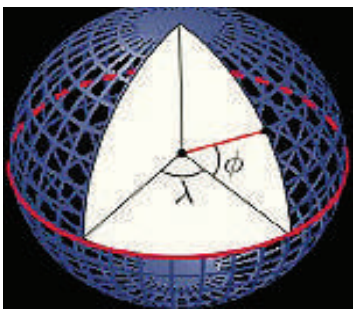
দ্রাঘিমারেখা

Line of latitude	Line of longitude

Now let us see how we can find latitude and longitude from the lines of latitude and the lines of longitude. Before that, let us talk about angles first. The space that two rays make at a meeting point is called an angle which is usually measured in units of degrees. The number of degree does not mean how larger one ray is than another or how far one ray is from another. Assuming one ray to be a fixed one, the amount of degree is defined as how much any point on the ray moves (or rotates) the point of juxtaposition, keeping the starting point of the other ray fixed.

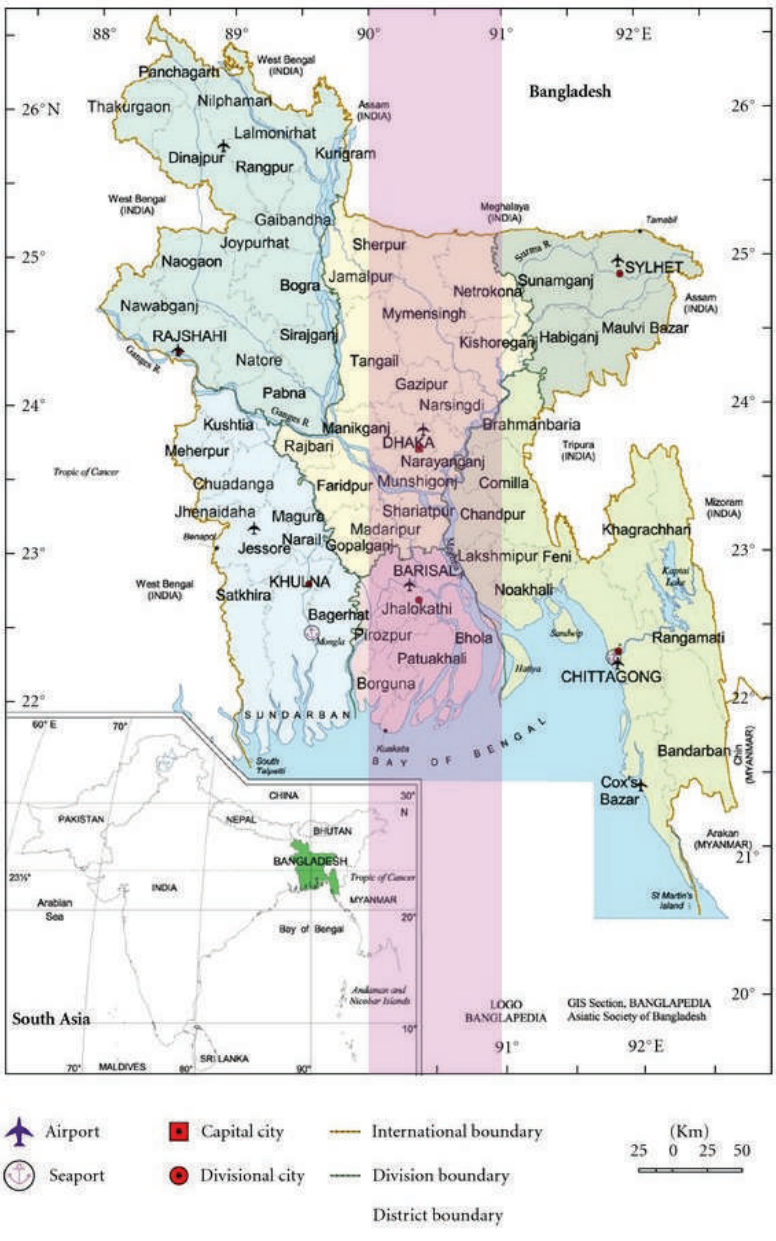
See in the figure below that 30 degree is quite little when it is near the vertex (the point where the angle is formed) and when it is far away it is quite big.

Latitude (akkhangsho) is the angular distance of a point north or south of the Equator. Longitude (draghimangsho) is the angular distance of a point east or west of the Prime Meridian. However, when we are saying 'distance', you should not think of it as kilometers. Kilometer is the unit of linear distance and degree is the unit of angular distance.



Latitude ($\varnothing$) and Longitude (λ)

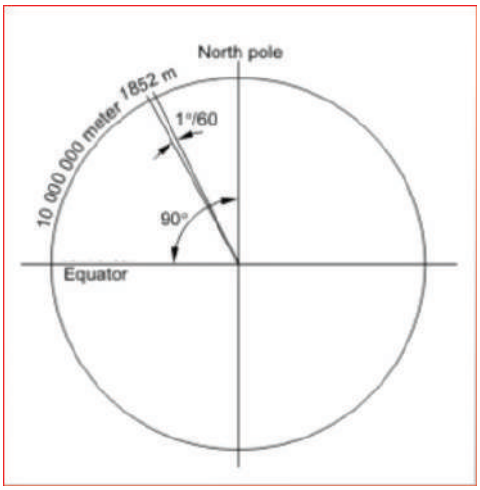
You can calculate this angular distance of the Earth's surface as a linear distance if you want. You know that the amount of one complete revolution is 360 degrees. The circumference of the Earth (once fully rotated) is around 40,075 km along the Equator. If we divide this circumference by 360, we get slightly more than 111. That means 1 degree of latitude in an angular distance equals a little more than 111 kilometers. Latitude and longitude are expressed in units of degrees, minutes and seconds. A degree is divided into 60 minutes. A minute can be further divided into 60 seconds.



The marked part of this map is 1 degree. It has to be shown in 60 minutes. Again, 1 minute out of 60 minutes should be divided into 60 seconds.

You must have seen the use of the word 'nautical' in front of the word 'mile' to measure the distance of the ocean. Do you know how this nautical mile came? A nautical mile is slightly longer than a mile on land. The nautical mile is calculated based on the longitude and latitude coordinates of the Earth. One nautical mile equals one minute of the latitude. If we calculate a little, we find the following –

The average circumference of the Earth is approximately 40,042 km and if we divide it by 21,600 [360 (degrees) × 60 (minutes)], we get 1 nautical mile. That is, the length of 1 minute of latitude is 1 nautical mile. Note that there is no such thing as a nautical kilometer. 1 nautical mile = 1.15 miles (approx.) = 1.852 kilometers (approx.).



নটিক্যাল মাইল

Now that we have learned a lot, let us play a fun game. We will split into two groups. One person from one group will look at the globe and say the name of a place. Then one person from the other group will come and write the latitude and longitude of that place on the board. The two groups will take turns to say the name of the place and to find the latitude and longitude. In turn, everyone will name a place and find the latitude and longitude of a place.

Two-wheels chariot and weapons found in the archaeological excavation at Sinauli of north India. According to time period, this discovery belongs to 1900-1800 BCE. The period of this discovery coincides with the idea of group migration from steppe grasslands.

These books give us ideas about the history of people during that time. For example, there was a war between different ethnic groups or tribes. On one side were the members of the Bharata tribe and on the other side were the members of ten tribes. After this war, the dominance of the Bharata tribe was established in the northwestern part of Indian subcontinent. As a result, we can find various proofs that there were wars and conflicts between those who claimed themselves to be Aryan or Indo-European speaking groups regarding various issues. This war and the spreading of the people speaking Indo-European languages beyond the Ganges-Jamuna basin created the 'Mahajanapadas' or the great realms.

Plateau

A plateau (malbhumi in Bangla) is a wide undulating or slightly uneven landform with steep slopes situated 300 meter or more above sea level. As the shape of the plateau looks like a table, it is also called 'table land'. For example, Deccan Plateau and Chota Nagpur Plateau in India and Pamir Plateau in Tibet etc. are some noteworthy plateaus.

Plateaus form by several processes, including upsurge of volcanic magma, drainage of lava, and erosion by water and glaciers.

They came in touch with other language groups. One of them was the Austro-Asiatic language group. After the invention of the cultivation of paddy in China, one community from there migrated by land to the Indian Subcontinent to settle in the southeastern part. This community helped many Austro-Asiatic languages (e.g., Munda, Khashi) to develop. Around this time, another language similar to the Tibeto-Burman language came to this subcontinent through the eastern part. These languages gave birth to further languages mixing with others. Besides, the change was comparatively low within some language groups.

So, you have clearly understood that no language is pure, unchangeable and original. Many languages were born from the mixing among the people of different languages. Moreover, changes occurred within the existing languages. Later on, through the next thousand years, people of different language groups arrived at different parts of the Subcontinent. One group of people formed kinship relations with other groups of people. They had business and trade communication. New concepts, thoughts and practices developed. Though the standard colloquial Bangla (pramita Bangla) we use today is a part of the Indo-European language family, there has been a mixture and assemblage of various languages, different sounds and diverse symbols of expressions from different regions over time. If you listen carefully to the languages around you, you will notice that people from different regions speak in different tones using different sounds and words even today. Therefore, the differences and diversity of language is a great evidence of the mixing and assortment of different ethnic groups and their languages in our history. This change in a language is closely related to the changes in society and people's life. We will discuss some more changes like this one and some historical issues that have survived in a continuous manner.

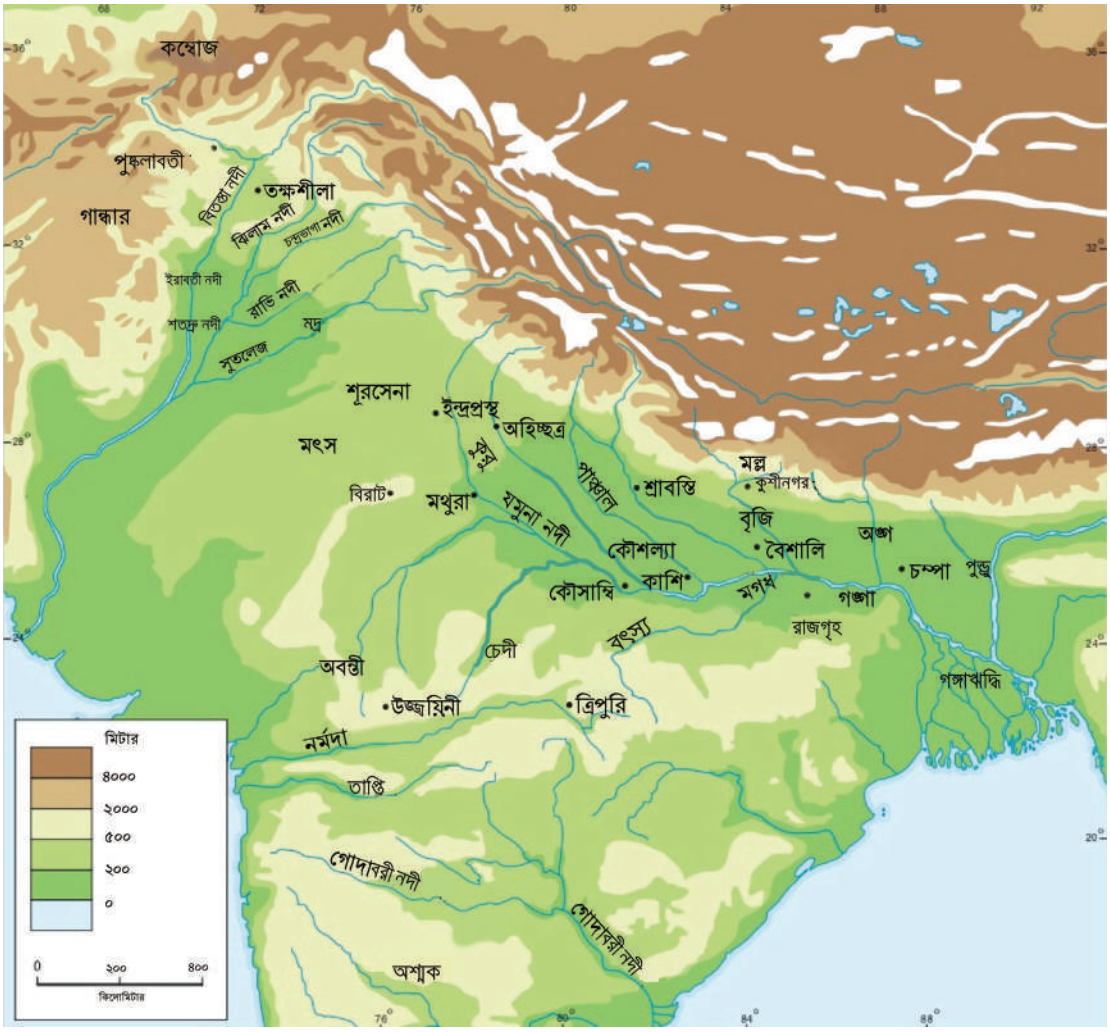
We know that no language is distinct or rigid. We will try to do an interesting task. You will tell a sentence to the family members. They will repeat and utter the sentence in the regional dialect of their respective birthplaces. Then you will note down the information in the following table.

Family member	Uttered sentence	Birthplace (where from)

Iron Age, Second Urban Civilization and Environment: Diversity in the Expansion and Fall of Empire

The sculpture of Goutama Buddha engraved on stone

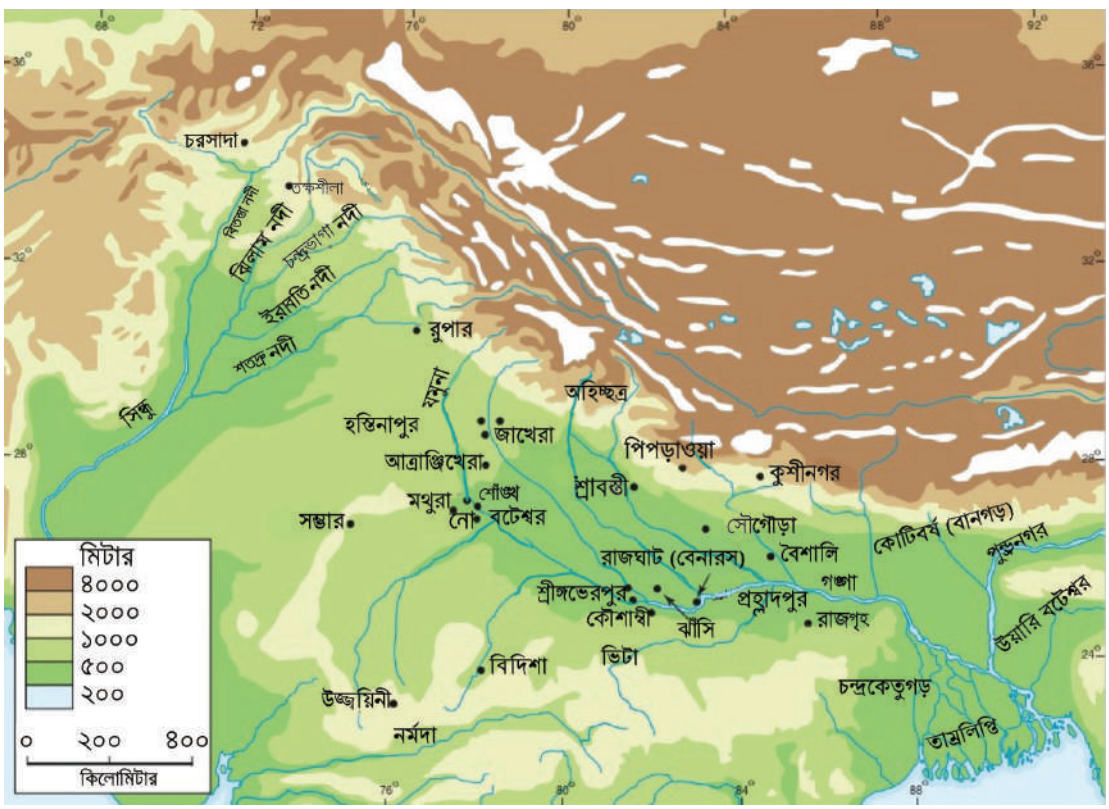
A number of remarkably major changes simultaneously took final shapes in the Indian subcontinent around the 6th to 4th century BCE. The use of iron made changes in the share (phala) of the plough. Because of the use of various instruments made of iron in various fields of agriculture, it became possible to cultivate a lot of land. Lands that were previously not possible to cultivate using copper, bronze or wooden ploughs also come under cultivation. At the same time, various debates emerged in the world of thought and knowledge. It was during this period when Gautama Buddha and Mahavira introduced new religious beliefs in Magadha and its adjacent regions in the eastern part of the Indian subcontinent. This religious doctrine began to question the various concepts of the Vedic religion. Besides, more thoughts and knowledge practice started. This does not mean, however, that there were no debates over concepts before this time. However, these thoughts and ideas of this time can be found in written sources presented a century or two later. Earlier, the Vedic ideas used to be learned by word of mouth from one generation to another. Later Vedic thoughts and its various commentaries began to be recorded just before the start of this period. These thoughts and literature were recorded in Sanskrit, Pali, Prakrit, Tamil and other languages. The problem is that it is difficult to determine the exact date or time of writing of many of these sources. It is because these were passed from generation to generation by hearing them from oral narration, remembering them and then telling them to the next generation. Thus, when various narratives are stored in people's memory for hundreds of years and a society recalls those words and commentaries through listening (shruti) and speaking (kathan), various changes and adaptations continue to happen. When those words are written down, a specific discourse emerges. Moreover, for hundreds of years, this written form and oral tradition based on memory and listening continued to work along with the written forms. When another person again wrote the same events, the narrative, commentary and style changed. As a result, different versions of the same text or written form have been created at different times and places. To determine which form is earlier and which one is later is not an easy task. Sometimes it is an impossible task. Therefore, it is difficult to understand the period of many written sources of this period. It is also difficult to say whether the events of the narrative actually took place in the past. A major responsibility of historians is to identify accurate and reliable accounts of different periods by testing and validating. Having a written source or material has advantages as well as disadvantages. Many fictional events can be mistaken for real if we are not careful.



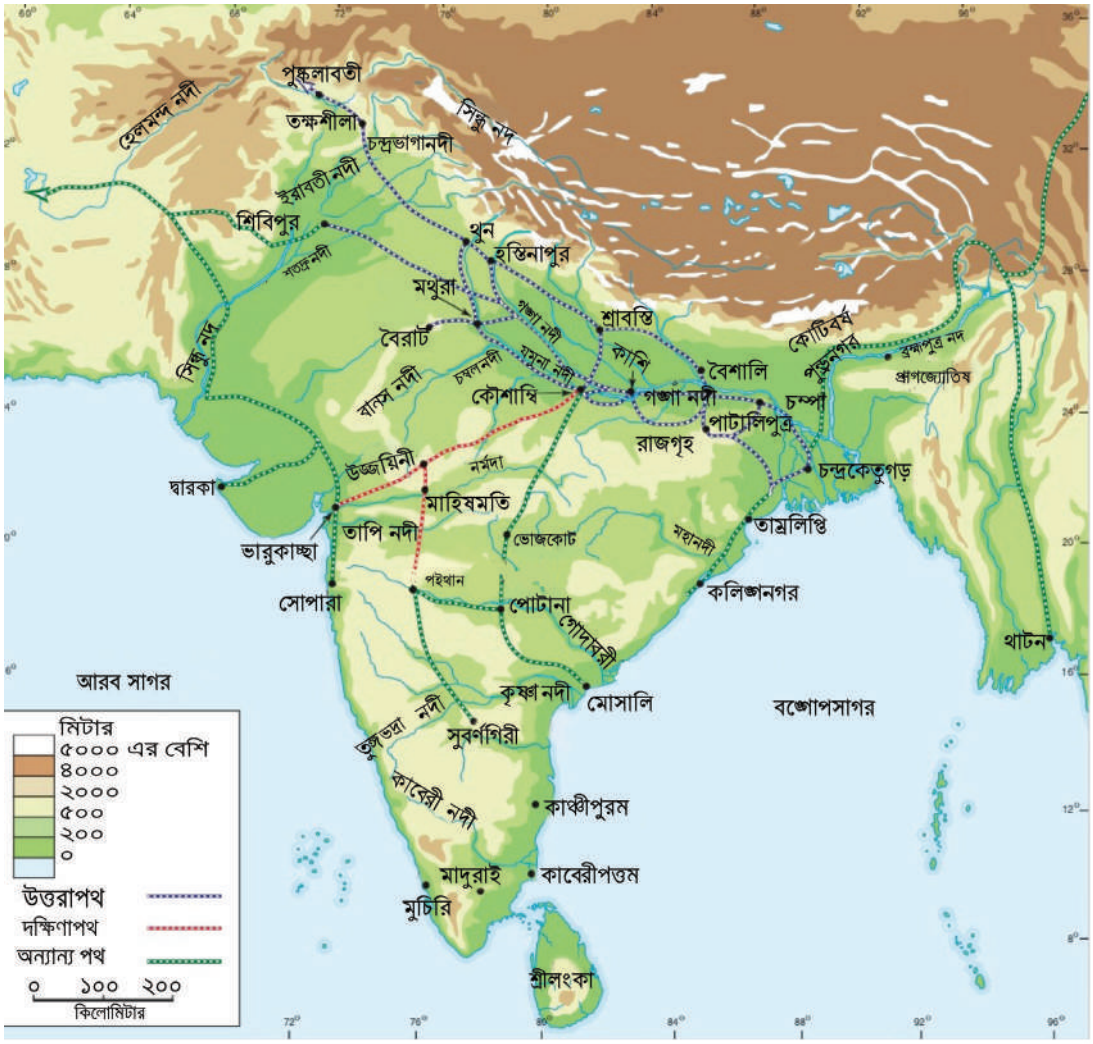
This map shows which regions of the Indian subcontinent the sixteen Mahajanapadas were located in. [Source: This map is an adapted version from maps in Upinder Singh's Book]

The development of agriculture, the development of trade with different parts of the world by sea, new concepts along with changes in society and politics also started from the 7th-6th century BCE. An elementary form of state emerged in various regions of the Indian subcontinent. Separate tribes and lineage-centric regions also developed. At this time, there were sixteen such regions in the Indian subcontinent. These were called the Sixteen Mahajanapadas (or sixteen great kingdoms). You need to know the difference between Janapada and Mahajanapada. 'jana' means a crowd or people and 'pada' means the area or region where those people travel, live or the region they possess. We find genealogy-centric various names in a variety of written sources referring to this period. You will know about it in the higher classes. Magadha and Anga Mahajanapadas probably extended across present-day Bangladesh and a large part of West Bengal and Bihar of present-day India.

Expansion of Maurya Empire



Major city centres in the northern part of India (basin of Ganges-Jamuna) during the second phase of urbanisation



Uttarapath, Dakshinapath and some other city centres were connected through land routes even before Maurya empire. All the communications were done through these routes. [Source: This map is an adapted version from maps in Upinder Singh's Book]

Let us know from our Buddhist friend/the books of Buddhism about the stories of Jataka (stories of Gautama Buddha's previous birth).

Think of a story you know but you haven't read it from any book, rather you have learned it orally from the family members. Now, write the oral story that you have learned and compare the written form with the previous oral version of the same story. Did you have to change anything?

Different cities, trade centres, ports, and centres of producing goods in South India.
[Source: This map is an adapted version from maps in Upinder Singh's Book]

There were two types of state systems during this period. One was known as Gano and Sangho. Some members of elite Kshatriyas used to control this region. They made the laws and defined the customs. The other system was kingdom where the king held supreme authority. One or more tribes together or the Sangho used to control many mahajanapadas. Class differences were still present in many layers of the society. There was discrimination between the higher and lower classes. Forest dwellers were considered lowly. There were other discriminations too. The Brahmin's power and control were yet to spread in many janapadas and mahajanapadas, especially in Magadha, Anga, Bideha and other western mahajanapadas. Brahmins were also less dignified in Gano or Sangho.

The control of Gano and Sangho, and the state system gradually became weak. Later, king-centred and dynasty-centred administration systems expanded. The dynasty under which this system of rule became widespread and strong is known as the Maurya dynasty.

Maurya dynasty's regime established the concept of unitary reign in the Indian subcontinent. In most places of the Indian subcontinent, unitary empires and states dependent on a single ruler's authority were established. Magadha mahajanapada, located in the eastern territory of India, was the centre of this monarchy. The capital city was Pataliputra (Patna, Bihar in present-day India). Under the reign of Emperor Ashoka, the Maurya state and its administrative system became most strong. Emperor Ashoka's name and fame are still remembered for various reasons. At first, he was involved in war and during the war of Kalinga, he was deeply shocked and saddened by seeing the death and destruction during war. Later, he converted to Buddhism. Buddhism speaks about ahimsa (nonviolence) and also urge everyone to love every animal on this earth.

Writings on a pillar established at the reign of Emperor Ashoka

To know more about Emperor Ashoka's fame and works, and to know more about the Maurya empire's administrative, economic, and social conditions, the most important sources are pillar inscriptions and petroglyphs with his edicts. He had installed pillar inscriptions and petroglyphs with his edicts in different places of the Maurya empire. These inscribed scripts represent Ashoka's religious principles, welfare works done for the people, and religious messages or edicts. In his seventh petroglyph, for example, he urged for harmony, cordiality and toleration despite differences in identity of community, individual identity, and opinions.

Position of some archaeological sites in Bangladesh and the Bengal delta regions

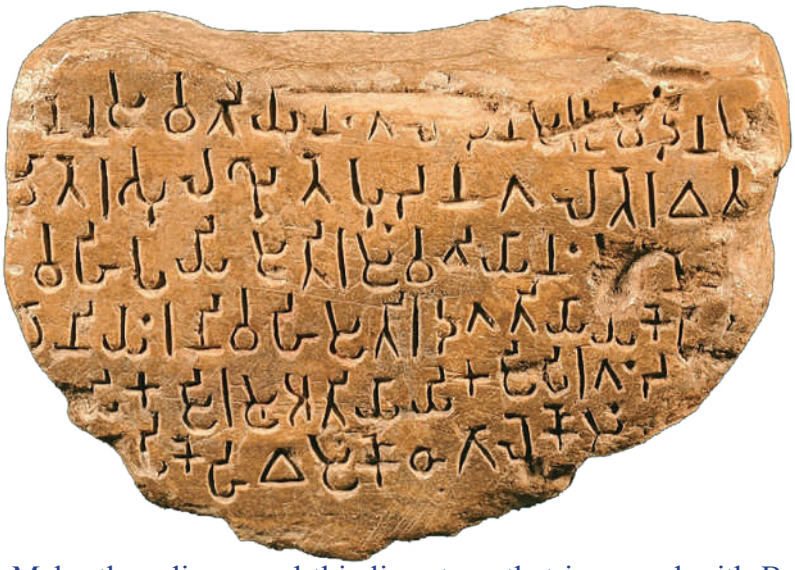
The administrative structure and order of Maurya state were planned and orderly. There were persons occupying different posts and titles for central administration, judges and revenue collection. There were also officials appointed to different posts for provincial and smaller areas included in the province. At that time or even late, the name of Pundra janapad, which was then part of Magadha, was mentioned. The name of a place called Banga has also been found in various later sources.

During this time, around the Ganges-Jamuna basin of India and in South India many urban centres flourished. This type of urban centres flourished after a long interval since Harappa civilization in the North, East and South India respectively. The historians call it the Second Urbanization. Many descriptions of these urban centres, and urban life have been found in different sources. You will definitely get pleasure in reading these descriptions when you grow up.

Ashoka-Pillar and Buddhist Stupas are located in the Vaishali of present-day India. Buddhist stupas are a kind of architecture. After the death of Gautama Buddha, the cremains were taken to different places and upon the cremains semi-circular buildings were built. To achieve afterlife rewards, upon the cremains of the Buddhist saints, preachers, teachers, and thinkers, stupas were built of different sizes and shapes. Stupas were also built as symbols of devotion. For the followers of Buddhism, Buddha Stupas are a place of observing religious rituals. The custom of making these types of stupas using mud, stones and carved stones in the Indian subcontinent and outside the Indian subcontinent started gradually and people started to worship in these places. Emperor Ashoka built many pillars at different places in his empire. On those pillars, Ashoka's speeches and different rules were inscribed. The upper part of those pillars was ornamented with a lion's sculpture, dharmachakro and with other decorations. Besides, Ashoka's speeches, different rules and regulations, and advice were carved on stone plaques and installed at different places. These scripts are a very important document of that time.

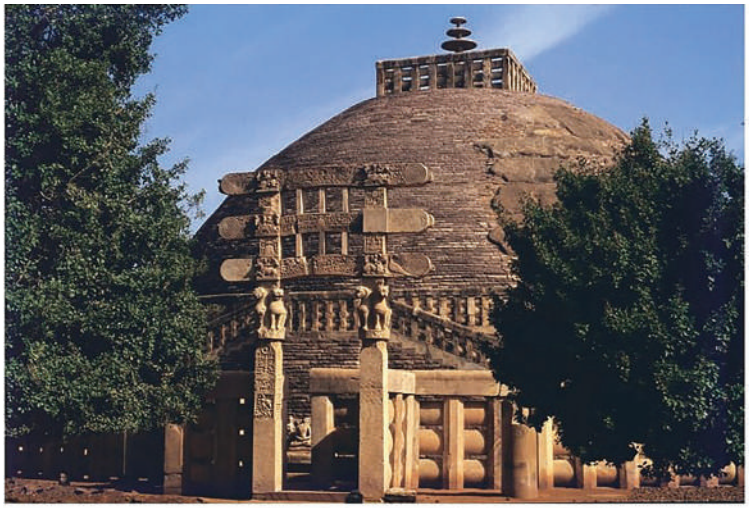
Ashoka Pillar and stone inscriptions of Emperor Ashoka in different places of Indian subcontinent [Source: This map is a transformed version from Upinder Singh's Book]

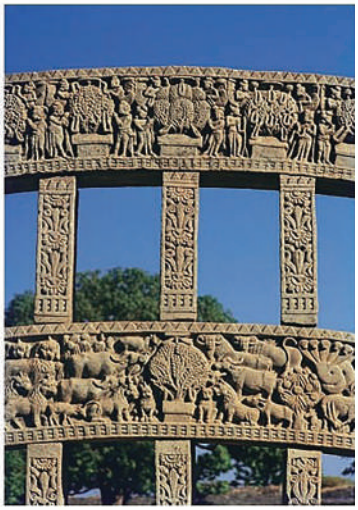
In the eastern part of the Maurya empire, many urban centres emerged especially in areas of present-day Bangladesh, West Bengal and Bihar of India. Among these, most notable ones are: Mahastangarh of Bogura and Wari-Bateshwar of Narsingdi. Brahmilipi (Brahmi script) carved stone found in Mahastangarh is of paramount importance in this regard.

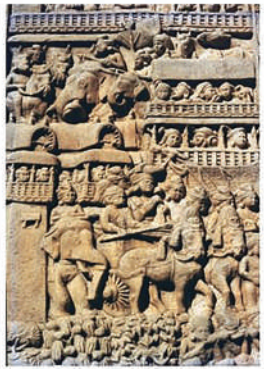


A farmer in Mahasthan discovered this limestone that is carved with Brahmi script. This script is an example of Maurya state administrators' various help to the general people. The earliest evidence of Pundranagara has been found in this inscription. This inscription is a proof that even thousands of years ago there was the tradition in this region of Bengal to give rice and money as a grant during calamities like floods.

Emperor Ashoka on a horse chariot







The pictures of different famous Buddhist Stupas ('Stupa' is Sanskrit for 'heap') situated in Sanchi, Madhya Pradesh, India. Carved sculptures found on many entrance gates of those Stupas.

Pataliputra was the capital and major city centre of Maurya Empire, also later of different kingdoms and Magadha. Pataliputra was situated in Patna, the capital of Bihar in India. Through the artist's eyes, the buildings, temples and roads of the then Pataliputra.

Mahasthangarh. The place inside the walls was a city. This is an imaginary picture of that city. In the picture, we can see the entrance gates to the city, water reservoirs inside the city with trenches, and the flow of the river Karatoya on the right-hand side. Mahasthangarh was established on the bank of the river Karatoya. This city was inhabited from the age of the Maurya rule till the Mughal period. During different rules, features and settlements of the city became different.

The then name of Mahastangarh was Pundranagar. From two urban centres we have found proofs of trade communication with different areas of the Indian subcontinent and with different places outside the Indian subcontinent. These cities were surrounded by high walls. Many settlements and establishments were outside the cities.

Chandraketugarh and Tamralipti in the south of West Bengal in India and Bangarh in the north exhibit the ruins of small and large cities of that period. Tamralipti was a large seaport. Central rule and government, government departments and individuals divided into different layers for collection of taxes and revenue, law and order management — all combined—the Maurya state system extended their rule and authority over a vast territory, including Bengal. During this period, various other religious sects, including the Buddhist and the Jaina sects and the shramanic (ascetic) sect abandoning samsara (family life) and bishay (material things) (renouncing family life and material desires and accepting paribrajya, they wandered in groups from place to place or lived by the donations of people) were important religions.

Urbanization

Urbanization refers to the transfer of population from rural to urban areas, the gradual increase in the proportion of people living in urban areas compared to rural areas, and the way in which a society adapts to this change.

Different Kingdoms created in the Indian subcontinent after the fall of Maurya Empire [Source: This map is a transformed version of maps from Upinder Singh's book]

Pictures of seals with various types of ships and inscriptions found at Chandraketugarh.

Silver or copper coins with an inscriptions. This type of coin was found in Mahasthangarh, Wari Bateshwar and other places in Bangladesh. Let us draw pictures of such coins or any other coins you have seen.

Kautilya was an important minister or courtier of Emperor Chandragupta Maurya. His book Arthashastra is an important document on economy, politics, war policy, administrative policy and society of that time. After Kautilya wrote Arthashastra, severel copies of the same were conserved on palm leaves and paper, and also circulated around. A sample picture such a copy is presented here.

Terracotta sculptures made by artists and craftsmen of Shunga rule have been found at Chandraketugarh, West Bengal, India. Common people's life is depicted on these tablets. Three men are carrying water or milk or something else in pitchers hanging from yokes. The plaque has been found partially broken.

Various changes also came in the social life. Different social classes were created including the rich, the poor and the slaves. The power of a specific group, lineage, or a specific occupation increased a lot. After a while, this group as a separate caste was known as Brahmin. A large section of them introduced the Vedas and various types of Veda-centric scriptures. Moreover, they started to control those who did not follow these scriptures. Warfare among different regions was conducted under the leadership of another special lineage.

Various iron weapons, especially arrow heads, found in excavations at Mahasthangarh.

At this time, many people from outside the Indian subcontinent came in groups for trade, war, and settlement. People came from Central Asia, Greece and Persia through present day Afghanistan. The silk road was known as a long trade route by land that stretched through China to Middle Asia to the Mediterranean Sea. Many regions of Bangla and India were also connected to that route. Although the trade route was named the Silk Road (also called Silk Route), it does not mean that the trade of high-quality silk or silk textile alone was transacted through this route. You may have heard of the word 'caravan'. In the past, when merchants travelled by horse, horse-drawn carriage, or ox-cart through inaccessible or accessible land, they usually used a procession of vehicles called a caravan.

Let us draw a picture of a caravan

In his Indian campaign, Alexander the Great, the then king of Greece, conquered parts of the northwestern region of the Indian subcontinent. He reached the Indian subcontinent from Greece with an objective to expand his empire by conquering successive countries. Due to the presence of rivers and various other reasons, he failed to advance towards northern India and to the east. However, his campaign left a far-reaching impact. The campaign opened up new avenues for communication, migration and trade. We will look into the impact of this campaign in later part of history. The process of communicating, exchanging and influencing one other among people of different languages, behaviours, food habits, religions and lifestyles continued to have effects as it had done since the prehistoric times.

Carved stone ships found in Mahasthangarh of undivided Bengal

At the same time, trade and communication by river and sea continued at that time. India got connected with various centres of the Roman Empire while it maintained communication with various centres of Southeast Asia as well. However, this communication system was not always direct in nature. Various necessities were sent and collected from one port to the next one, and then from that port to another. Sailors and merchants relied on the position of stars in the sky and the sea currents to maintain long distance communication.

The feature that was, and still is, unique in the case of Bengal is the river system pervading this land. The network of rivers, canals, water bodies and land offered a lot of help in communication system. At the same time, this riverine network was quite troublesome for strangers unfamiliar with such an environment.

Rivers, land and the sea to the south of Bangladesh together had huge impacts on agriculture, trade and communication. Business centres, agriculture and general transportations – all were built and developed around this riverine environment. Another great feature of our region is the monsoon winds and rainfall.

River

A river is a natural freshwater watercourse that is formed by streams, glaciers, or natural changes. Rivers eventually flow into oceans, lakes, or other rivers or reservoirs.

Imaginary picture of the ocean-going ships. These types of ships were used by the Arabian businessmen and they ran their business in the Indian Ocean, Arab Sea and Bay of Bengal.

The picture of a city situated at the riverbank and some boats. Imaginary picture of Pundranagar, Bangladesh (Source: Transformation of a painting by Suja-Ud-Doula)

These ships were made of wood and rope in Bengal and Odisha

Recreated picture of an ocean-going ship. Trades continued in these types of ships from the seaports of Bangla and Odisha.

We have already seen many pictures and models of boats and ships. Let us do an interesting task. Let us prepare those models of ships and boats with mud or paper and show them to our friends.

The monsoon winds are the most influential winds in the climate of South Asia and the Indian Ocean region. The direction of monsoon winds changes with the change of seasons due to variations in temperature and coolness of sea and land in summer and winter. Eventually, the look of water, rivers and land changed at different times of the year. These would reveal their looks in one way in the rainy season, in another way in the winter, and in a different way during the summer. As a result, the kings, rulers or war campaigners coming from outside to wage wars in this region, to occupy lands or to exercise authority faced much difficulty. It would have been impossible to invade, maintain authority over and rule this land without having the ability to fight in the river routes and in the rain and flood. Unless one had the ability and skill to conduct war across different water bodies, it was quite difficult to conquer this land. This Nature, rain and rivers played a crucial role in defeating the Pakistani hanadars (aggressors) during our liberation war. You may have already noticed it.

The scenery of paddy harvesting in 4th – 3rd BCE in Chandraketugarh, West Bengal, India

Various cheap stone beads were discovered in Wari-Bateshwar

The rainwater, which was captured during the rainy season in the areas at the Himalayas and its neighboring areas to the north, was drained by the rivers of Bangladesh. This water carried silt to the south into the Bay of Bengal as it does today. There was a difference between the trade and communication occurring in the rainy season and those occurring in winter when the rivers became low or some rivers even dried up. Everyone knows how

An imaginary scene of a settlement near Mahasthangarh

profound the relationship between agriculture and this rain and silt was and still is. The relationship among land, rainfall, rivers and water is one of the reasons working behind the cultivation of paddy in our country and rice being our staple food. You will be surprised to know that scenes of rice harvesting have been found engraved on terracotta tablets at Chandraketugarh in present-day West Bengal. This site was one of the major cities and ports of the Bengal region during the 4th to the 3rd BCE.

Images of boats and ships of that period have also been discovered. It is difficult to find such examples in history where crop cultivation, communication and trading were done keeping close association with the environment, water, rivers and nature. The people of Bengal, including Bangladesh, not only engaged themselves in cultivation, but also maintained communication and trade with various parts of the Indian subcontinent and other parts of the world. Historians continue to discover new proofs related to these activities.

Imaginary picture of another large city of Magadha and entrance gate of Kushinagar related to Gautama Buddha's life

Brick-made path discovered in an archaeological excavation at Mahasthangarh. Archaeologists of Bangladesh and France jointly ran the excavation.

A reservoir found in Wari-Bateshwar excavation

Circular bastion (buruj) at Mahasthangarh discovered in an archaeological excavation. Archaeologists of Bangladesh and France jointly ran the excavation.

Let us now draw the artefacts that have been found at Mahasthangarh and Wari-Bateshwar.

Place	Artefacts
Mahasthangarh	
Wari-Bateshwar	

The Fall of an Empire, New States, and Societal Changes

No empire is eternal. Soon after the death of Emperor Ashoka, new dynastic kingdoms began to emerge in different parts of the vast Mauryan Empire. The Maurya rulers started to lose control over their territories. New kingdoms arose and rulers began to exercise influence by creating new kingdoms. As it happened in previous millions of years, the invasion and influx of people from different places or regions outside the Indian subcontinent continued. Sometimes some foreign groups, tribes or dynasties were able to rule some parts of the Indian subcontinent. As a result, towards the end of the Maurya rule, especially from the northwestern corner of the Indian subcontinent, people of different tribes in different regions began to exercise authority. Various proofs of Bactrian-Greeks coming from present-day Afghanistan, Shaka-Pallavas (Scythian-Parthians) from Central Asia, and Kushans (or Kui Shangs) from nearby areas, the Shaka-Kshatrapas in western India, Satavahana in the Deccan, and Chera, Chola and Pandya kingdoms at the edge of southern India have been found. Various ethnic groups came from central Asia, the territories of Chinese influence, and Persia with the aim to exert influence in the Indian subcontinent. Although the Mauryan Empire and its influence were absent, their administrative hierarchy to run the state and empire, business communication and urban development continued. We have an idea that the rule of an empire or a kingdom with a central king or emperor usually helps boost trade

The location of the kingdoms and the rulers of different regions of the Indian subcontinent in the Gupta and Satavahana period. This extended with the rise of the empires and contracted with their decline.

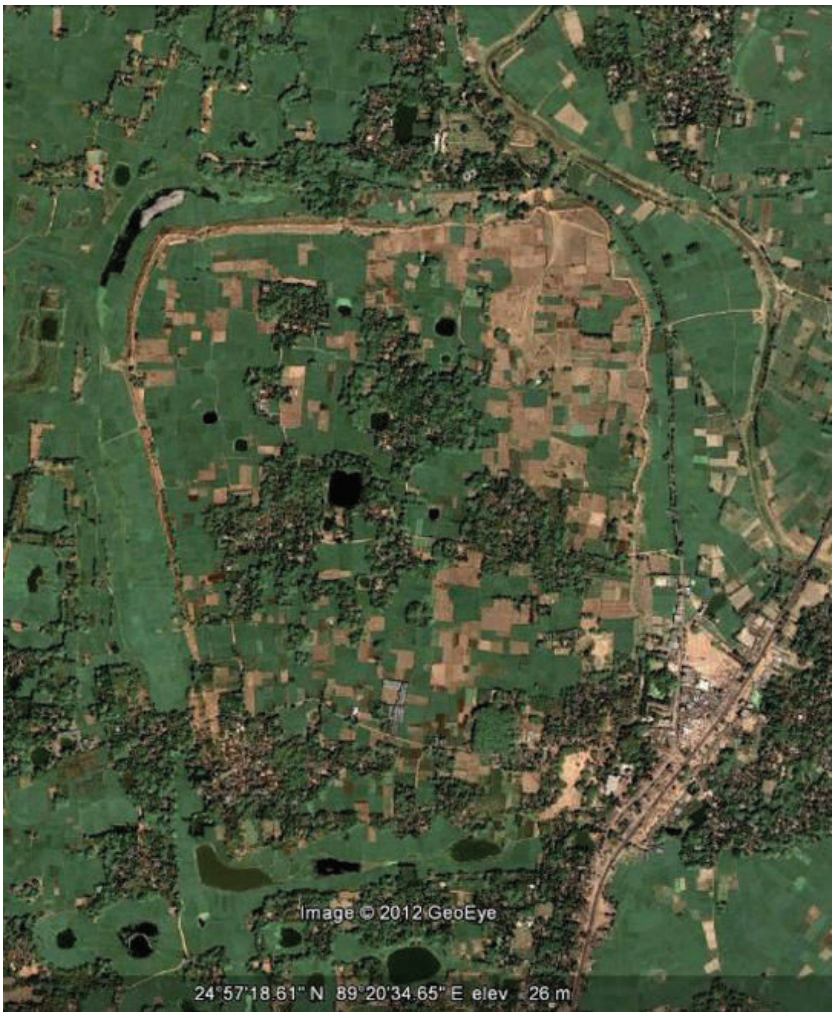
and commerce, revenue collection, expansion of agricultural land and crop production. However, this period offers us the proof that business and development of urban centres can continue even in the midst of rampages of war.

In addition to conflicts over the possession of different territories, connections occurred among varieties of new people, places and lifestyles coming from outside and inside. People from different places continued to come for business, tourism and propagation of religion. From the Indian subcontinent, Buddhist mendicants started traveling to the north-west through China, various countries in Southeast Asia, and Afghanistan. However, along with Buddhism and Jainism, the Brahmanical social and political system became quite important in the region that was under the Magadha influence, much of today's Bangladesh.

The Shunga dynasty supported this change. On the other hand, although the Kushan dynasty was Buddhist in religious belief, their main settlement was at the northwestern part of the Indian subcontinent (i.e., present-day Pakistan, part of Afghanistan and northwestern part of India). The extent of the influence of the Shungas and Kushans in Bangladesh has not yet been reasonably determined. However, various archaeological proofs found at Mahasthangarh suggest that people were living in this city at that

Gold coins issued during Kushan Emperor Kanishka III

A gold coin issued during the reign of the Kushan emperor Huvishka



Aerial photograph of Mahasthangarh or ancient Pundranagar in Bangladesh. The city centre was surrounded by moats (ditches like canals containing water) surrounded by fort walls.

time and continued their usual day-to-day activities. It is not certain whether this city was under Kushan or Shunga rule. Moreover, it is not clear whether the city of Pundranagar had similar importance from an administrative perspective during this period, the way it enjoyed importance during the Maurya period. Nevertheless, the fact that Mahasthangarh held its position as an important centre of trade and human settlement can be guessed from various archaeological evidence.

Coins issued during the reign of the Kushan emperors and terracotta plaques used during the Shungas have been found at different parts of Bangladesh. However, there is no clear evidence whether the north-west of Bangladesh was politically or territorially a part of that empire. These coins and plaques may have reached these places as business and Arts products. Many contemporary terracotta pictures of the Shunga period have been found at Chandraketugarh in West Bengal in India. Still, it is difficult to say whether the city was under Shunga rule. This kind of uncertainty or question remains as an integral element in history.

Administration, Feudalism and Kingdom: The Return of the Empire

The northern, northwestern and eastern parts of the Indian subcontinent had been divided into several states and territories. This large area again came under a rule in the third century CE. This new state or empire was established and ruled by the Gupta emperors. There were also smaller tributary kingdoms under this empire. On the other hand, another state was established under the rule of the Vakataka kings in the southern corner of the Indian subcontinent.

Sample of gold coins from Gupta period

Several copperplate inscriptions (tamralipi) issued by the Gupta Empire have been found in the northern part of Bangladesh, especially in the present-day Dinajpur district. These copperplate inscriptions are mainly deeds of land purchase and sale. Also, various types of gold coins issued by the Gupta emperors have been found from different parts of Bangladesh. At that time, the name of this gold coin was Dinar. However, people used many types of exchange methods in their daily life. A variety of information about the society, administration, trade and agricultural system of this period has been known from various archaeological and written sources. As you grow up, you will come to know more about these aspects.During the Gupta Empire, the state was under a very stratified and

The terracotta sculptures of the Gupta period. These are of normal human size.

hierarchical administrative and revenue system. The empire was divided into provinces. These provinces were called desha or vukti. The area that was under a province was called a bishoy. The smaller unit under a bishoy was called bithi, or patta or pathak or petta. The lowest unit was a gram. The way we have different officers to run each administrative unit these days, there were similar officials or committees of officers. The council of representatives was called adhikarana. Everyone in charge of a unit had a unique name and title. For example, according to a copperplate found in Bangladesh, the Pundravardhana vukti (roughly present-day Rajshahi, Dinajpur, Chapainawabganj,

Gupta emperor Chandragupta riding a horse, engraved on a gold coin

Gold coin depicting the image of Gupta emperor Samudragupta

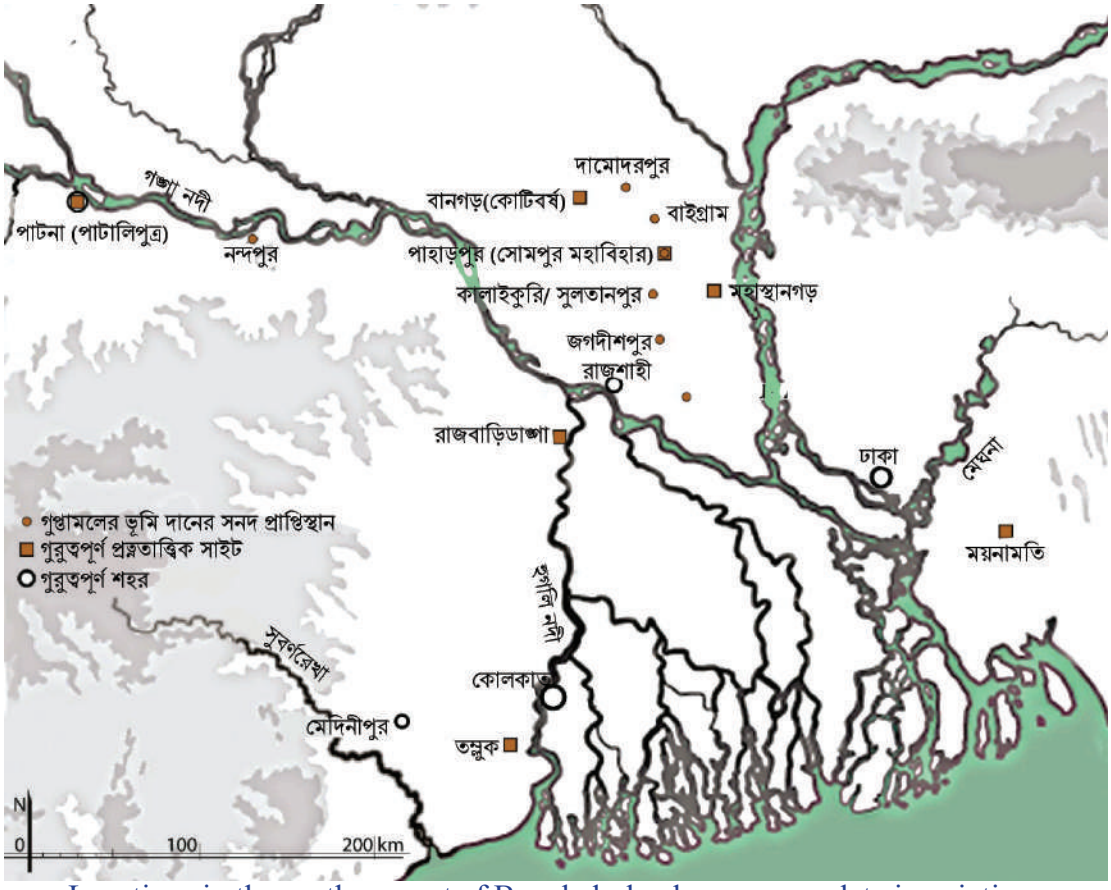
A temple of the Gupta period

Bogura, Pabna, Sirajganj, Thakurgaon and adjoining areas of West Bengal in India) had kotibarsha as its bishoy.The adhikaran of the kotibarsha named bishoy (the centre of which seems to be present-day Bangarh of South Dinajpur of West Bengal in India) included: bishoypati or uparika (chief officer), nagar-shreshthi (the chief merchant or moneylender of the city at that time), swarthabaha (chief of those who transported goods by horses or ox-carts by land), pratham-kulika (chief of artisans or merchants), and prathama- kayastha (head of deed writers or revenue collectors). By now, you must have noticed that even at that time there were people posted in different positions, from high to low ones to perform different kinds of work. All this was maintained for smooth running of the state. Besides, an administrative system was built with representatives of different occupations in the society.

Terracotta plaque of the Gupta period

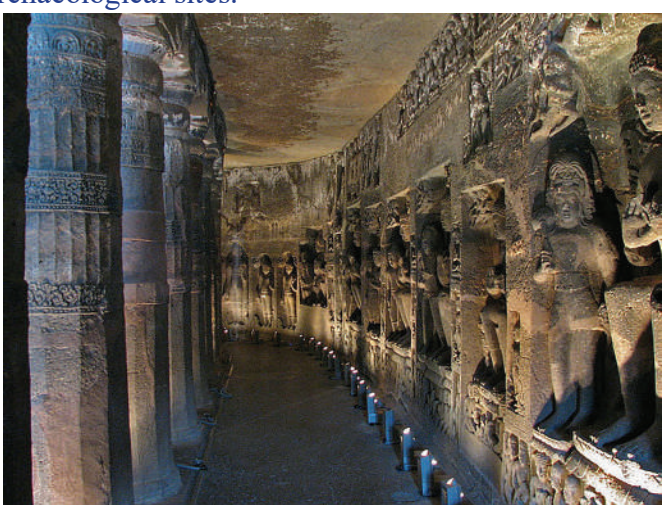
During this period, as agriculture expanded, business and trade also expanded in various regions. There was separate budget allocation for the army and the army was treated as a separate profession. In various regions, mainly the Sanskrit language began to be used in state activities. Many instances of literature, law and other writings of this time written in the Sanskrit language have been found.

Copperplate inscription (Tamralipi) of the Gupta period. A deed of sale of land.



Locations in the northern part of Bangladesh where copperplate inscriptions (Tamralipi) of the Gupta period have been found. List of several important archaeological sites.

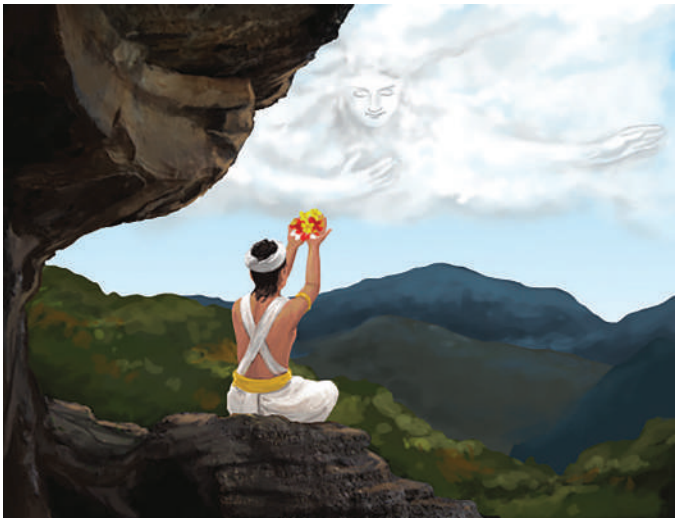
Atish Dipankar



A picture of cave sculptures among many murals and cave sculptures of Gupta period. These sculptures were carved in stones. These are magnificent examples of art and technology of that period.

A temple carved out of stone at Ellora

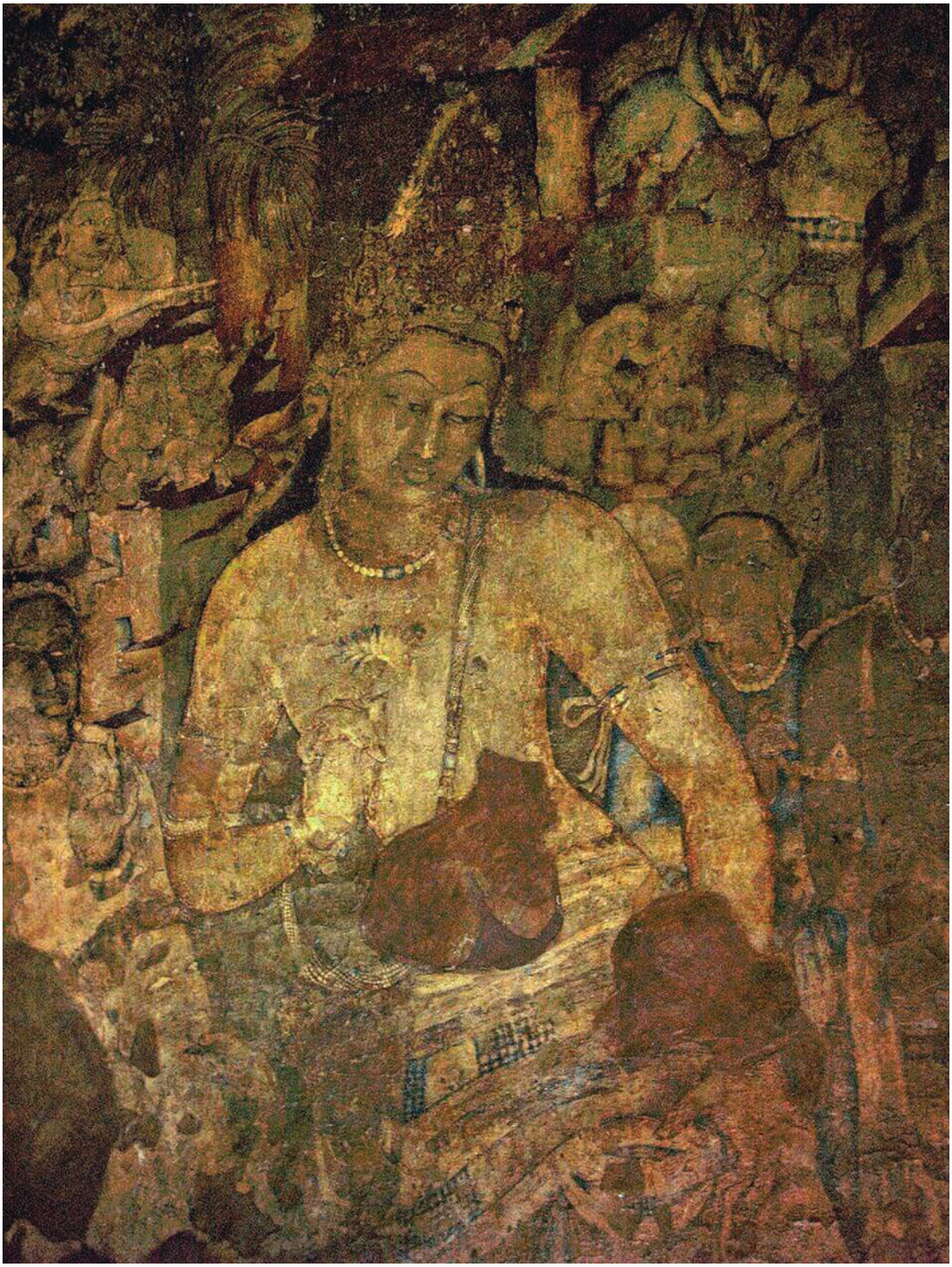
Nalanda Mahavihar (situated in present-day Bihar, India) developed as a Buddhist centre as well as a learning centre during the Gupta period



A scene imagined from the epic Meghdut written by Kalidasa. He composed this epic during the reign of the Guptas.

The great poet Kalidasa is composing poetry (an imaginary scene). He lived during the Gupta period.

Statues of Gautama Buddha collected from different parts of the Indian subcontinent



Cave paintings at Ajanta

Let us prepare a chronological list of empires. Then write at least two artefacts of each empire and draw pictures of them.

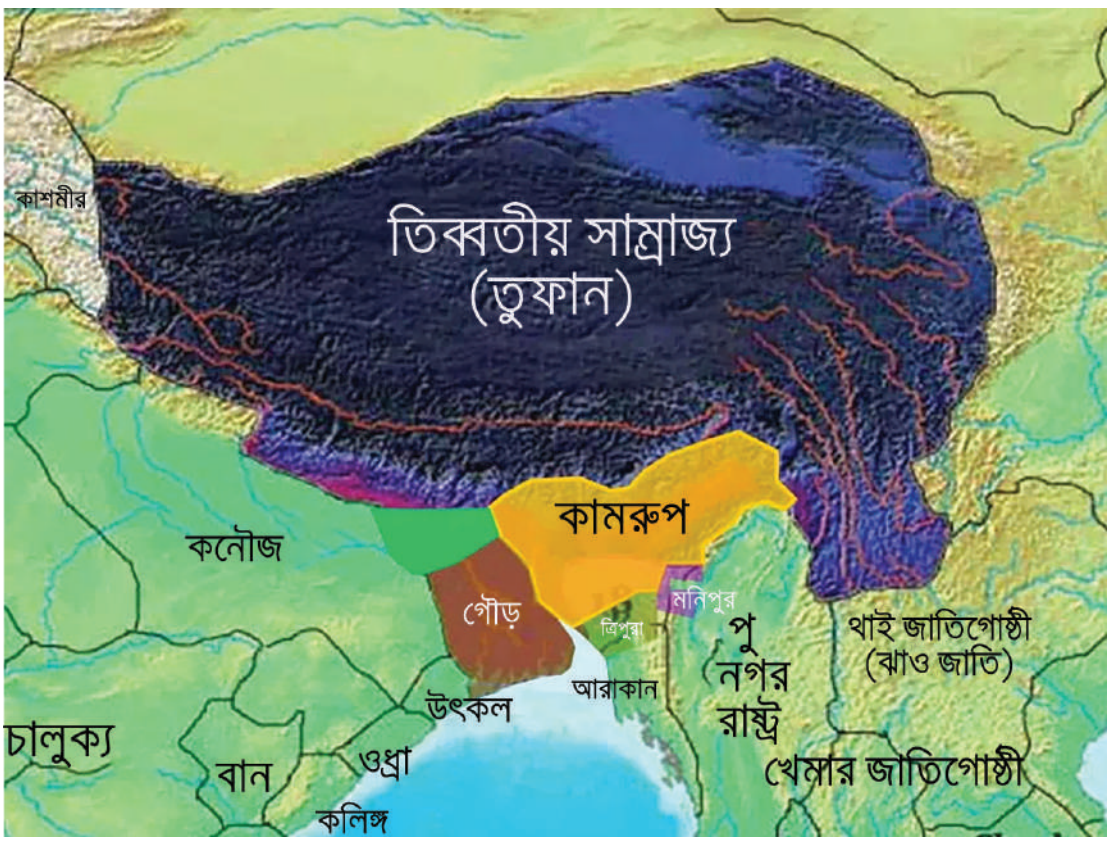
Pictures of the Ajanta caves. Artists and craftsmen of that time created these caves by carving the mountain.

A cave painting at Ajanta

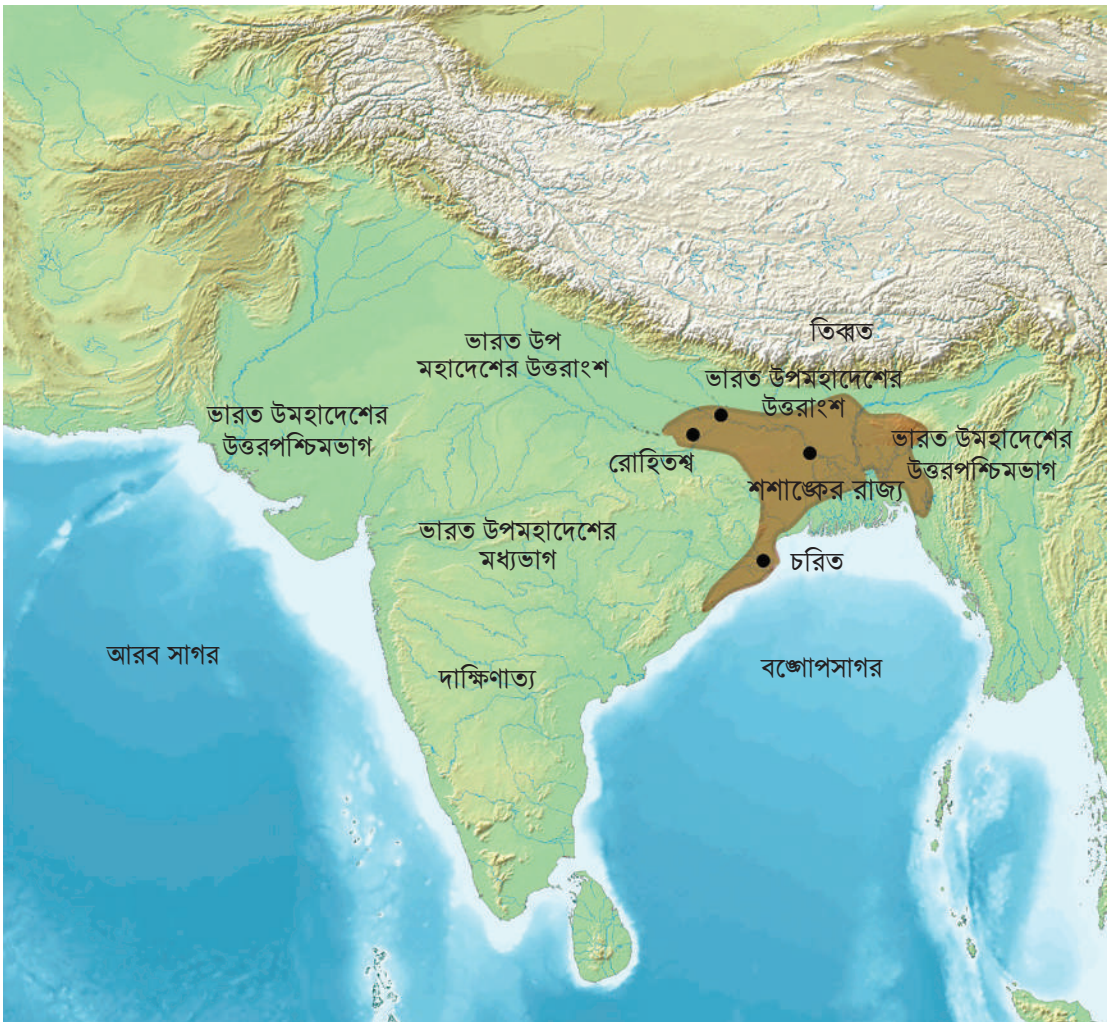
Regional Identity, Agricultural Expansion and Third Urbanisation: Communication, Assimilation and Competition

Sub-region, State, Feudalism, and the Third Urbanisation: Rise of Regional Identities

This empire too gradually fell to pieces. Many small dominions appeared. The owners of a huge area of land, who were subordinate to the emperors, were called mahasamanta, mahamandalik, or samanta. Many of them established independent dominions. After the fall of the Gupta dynasty in Bengal, other dynasties came to power. Among them, there was Gauda which was established in the extended region of the northern part of present-day Bangladesh. In the middle of the ৮th century CE, a new territory was established in the erstwhile Pundravardhana region. On the other hand, some new dynasties such as Kharag, Chandra, Dev, etc. emerged in Samatat-Harikel-Srihatta region (present Cumilla, Sylhet, and Chattogram region). The capital of Gauda was Karnasubarna (Murshidabad of West Bengal in present-day India).



During Shashanka's reign, Gauda Kingdom's contemporary kingdoms and territories



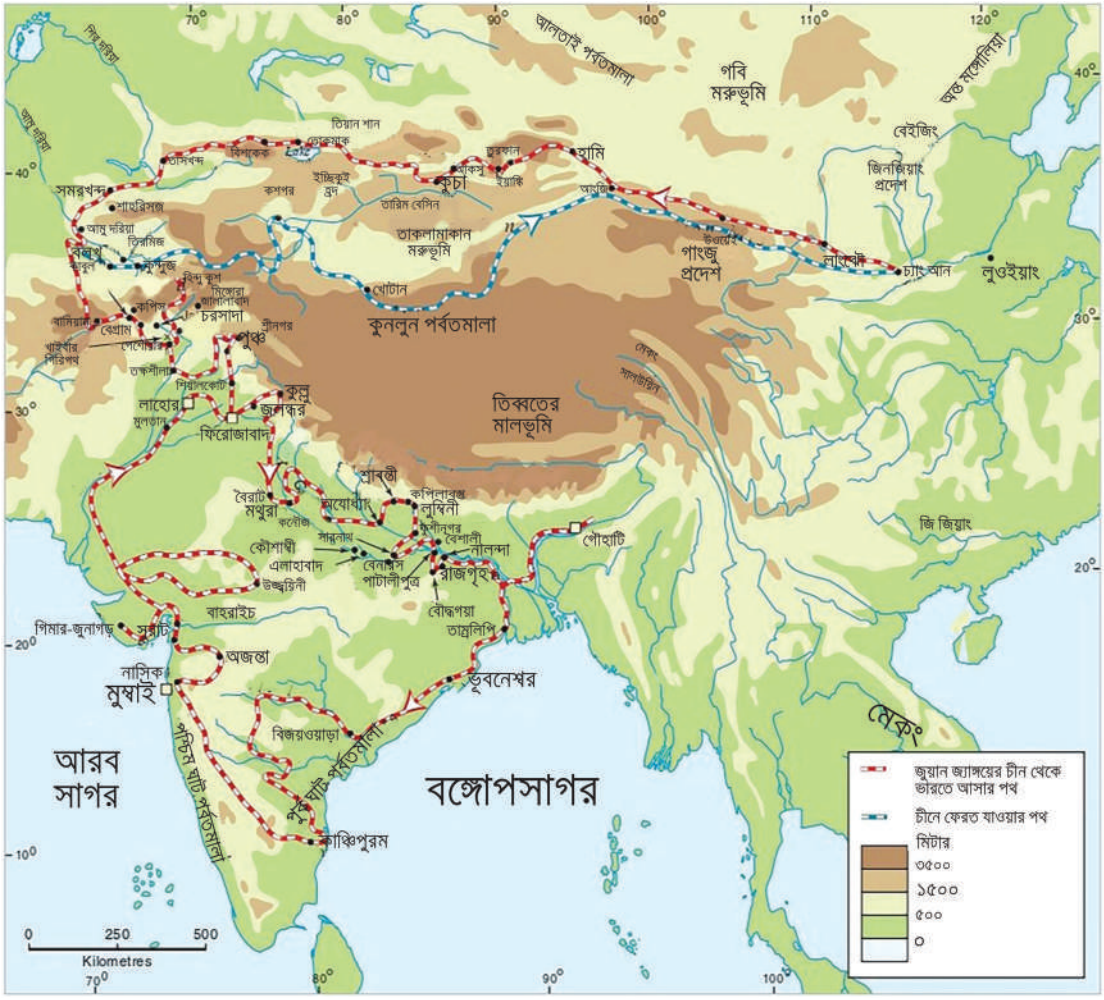
The approximate expansion of Shashanka's rule. It spread over the northwestern part of Bangladesh, the eastern part of Bihar, and the northern and southern part of West Bengal.

The Coins during Shashanka's reign of Gauda Kingdom

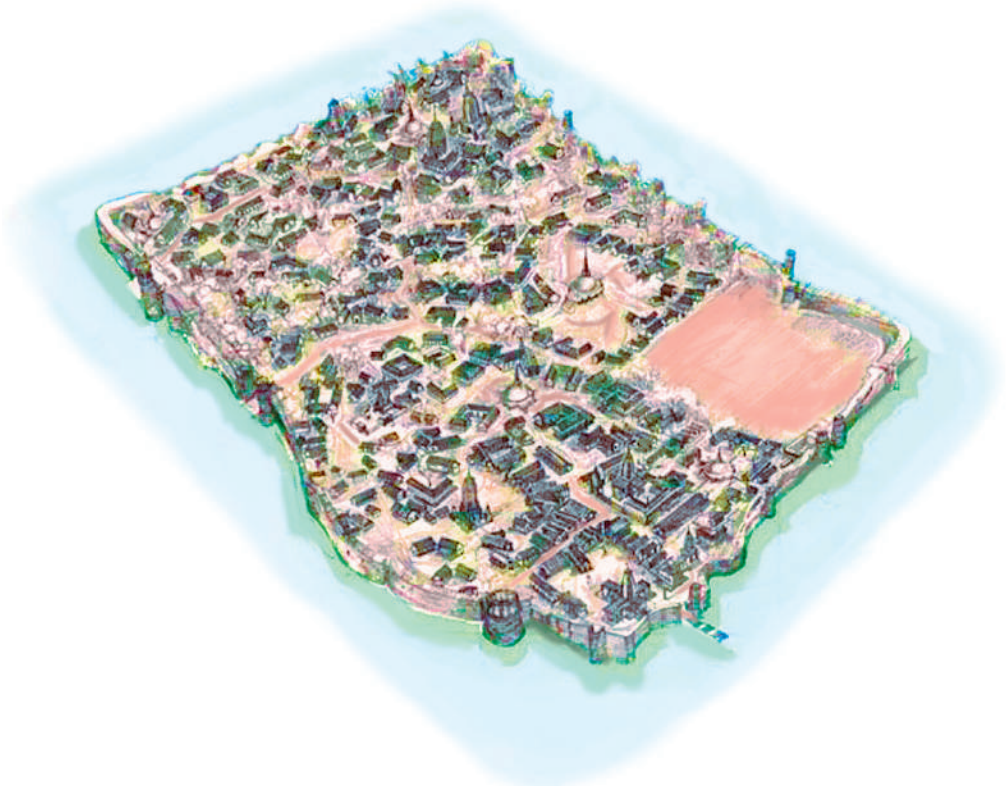
Regional states became prominent in many parts of the Indian subcontinent. We cannot realise the nature of this state if we only consider the ruling system. It is because in the ৭th and ৮th centuries CE, particular identities, religious practices, and social features already began to develop in various small regions. Among these sub-regions, there were Banga, Barendra, Samatat, Harikel, and part of Kamarupa under present-day Bangladesh. Rarda belonged to present day West Bengal. Some sub-regions had the same ruler for some time. However, change or constancy of rulers did not affect the lifestyle, society, or identity of the common people. Even under the same ruler, there were conflicts, battles, and rivalry to maintain the ownership of the regions. For example, the north-west portion of present-day Bangladesh and many parts of the West Bengal and Bihar of present-day India came under the rule of Pala dynasty. In the northern and central part of present India, there were the rulers from Gurjar-Pratihar and Chandela, in the central and western part there was Rashtrakut, in the southern and

Sub-regions developed during 8th-9th CE in undivided Bengal and different related regions.

central part there were Chol, Pandya, Hoysala, Pallava, Kadamba and Cher etc. Battles and rivalry continued among these dynasties to capture several regions. The interesting fact is even during these conflicts, new developments in business, agriculture and urbanisation flourished. Literature and other texts in different languages and religious scriptures also developed during this time. Chandra, Dev, Burman and other dynasties came to the throne in Samatat-Harikel-Srihatta, the southeastern part of the country. During this time, many sects of Brahmanism (Vaishnab, Shakto, Shoibo, Sourio etc.), Buddhism (Mahayana, Vajrayana, Theravada, Sahajiya etc.), and Jainism developed. In the religious tradition Vaktibad, Tantrayana and other doctrines emerged and their followers started to increase. The number of followers of Buddhism decreased in other parts of India. Many previous Buddhist institutions (Buddhist monasteries based on Shangha and Mahaviaharas) also started to lose importance. Still, in the eastern part of India, including present-day Bangladesh, there was the rise of Buddhist philosophical practices like Vajrayana, Tantrayana, Sahajiya etc. Simultaneously, and related institutions increased as well.



Xuanzang's travel route from China through Indian subcontinent and his visit to different Buddhist religious places and the route back to China. [Source: This map is a transformed version of a map from Upinder Singh's Book]



Pundranagar's indoor settlements, temples and ponds. How did they look like? Based on the imagination of artists. [Source: Based on Sajid-bin-doza and Farhana Nazim Chowdhury's drawings.]

Mukteshwara Temple at Bhubaneshwar, Odisha of present-day India. It is an ideal example of Kalinga style architecture of that time.

Chinese traveler Xuanzang's portrait has been found from different sources. This picture is a reproduction of one such portrait.

he ruins of Nabaratha Hindu temple found in Kaharole, Dinajpur, Bangladesh. The upper structures of this temple and Birol's temple were ruined. However, the upper structure remained intact in Mukteshwara Temple in Bhubaneshwar, Odisha, India, that you have seen earlier. The difference is – Mukteshwara Temple's upper structure is made of stone whereas these temples' upper structures are made of bricks.

The ruins of Buddhist and Hindu temples found through an excavation in Birol, Dinajpur, Bangladesh.

Many Sangha or Sangharams and many viharas including Sompur Mahavihara of Paharpur, Naogaon in Bangladesh, Sitakot Vihara of Dinajpur, Lalmai-Mainamati-Shalban Vihara of Cumilla, Ananda Vihara of Bikrampur, Voje Vihara and Nandadirghika Mahavihara of Jagatjibanpur in West Bengal, Bikramshila Mahavihara of Anatichok in Bihar and Nalanda Mahavihara were established. At the same time, many temples were also established in the northern and southwestern parts of Bangladesh. Many settlements such as Vitargar of Panchagar were built using clay or clay-bricks.

Regional states of different regions, rulers' family titles, and the position of kingdoms. [Source: This map is a transformed version of a map from Upinder Singh's Book]

During the Palas, Gurjara-Pratiharas, and Rastrakuta's reign, three major states emerged in the Indian subcontinent.

Astasahasrika Pragna Paramita text written during the Pala period. Such texts used to be written or decorated in the Buddhist monasteries in eastern India including Bangladesh.

Image and story of Buddhist religion drawn and written on palm leaves during the Pala dynasty.

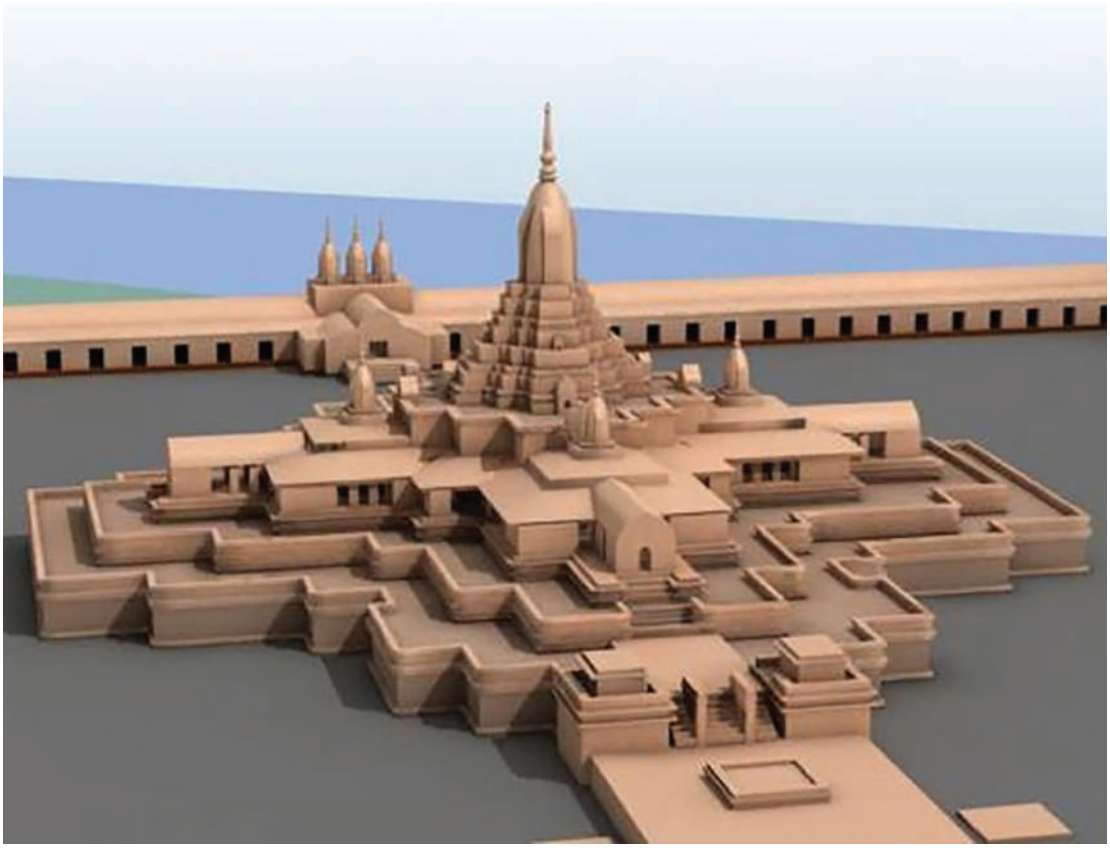
Buddhist goddess Tara in a cave painting in Alchi.

Picture of horse riding in Alchi's cave paintings. Historians assume that Alchi's cave paintings have similarities with the paintings of Pala period.

Nalanda Mahavihara's vihara and temple situated in Bihar, India

Vikramshila Mahavihara's central temple situated at Achintak, Bihar, India

The picture of Sompura Vihara with its central temple situated in Naogaon



The bird's eye view of Sompura Mahavihara's central temple. Historians' assumption.

The largest South-Asian bronze Braja-Satta sculpture discovered in an excavation at Cumilla's Bhoja Vihara. This is now preserved in a museum at Lalmai, Mainamati, Cumilla.

Vishnu sculpture carved in stone

An imaginary depiction of Mahasthangarh's out-of-town settlement. [Source: Adapted from a drawing by Sajid Bin Doza.]

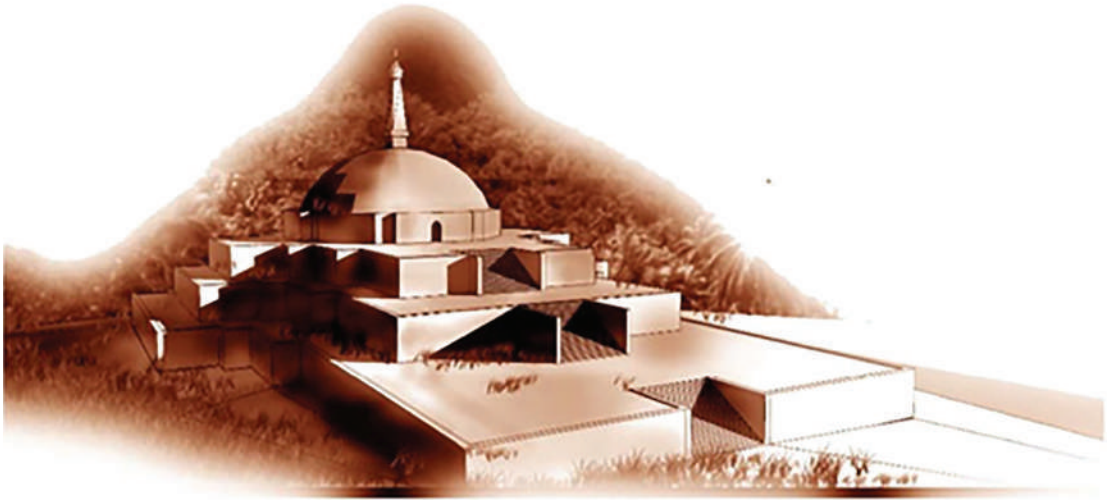
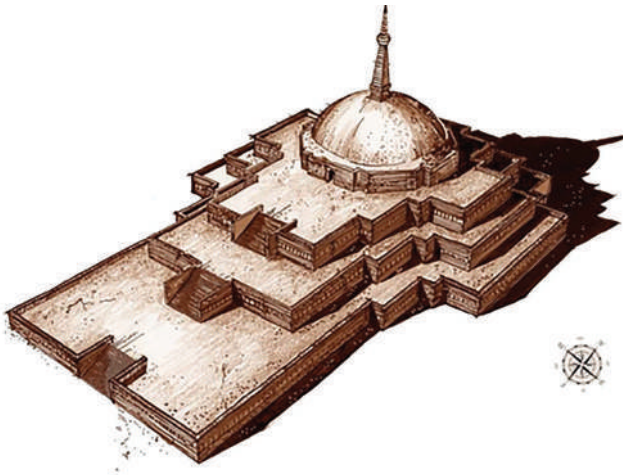


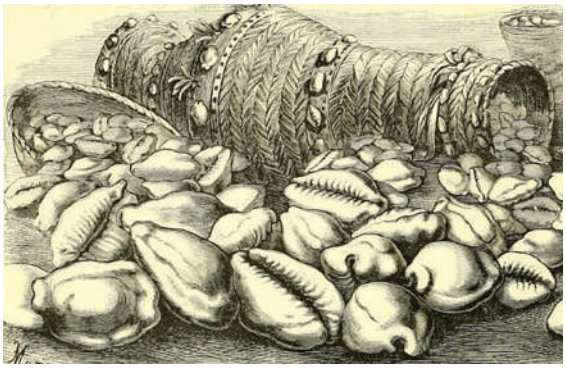
Image taken from the ruins of Gokul Medh near Pundranagar or Mahasthangarh in Mahasthan, Bangladesh. A temple was built on top of a place by making box-like structure all around. This architectural technique has been followed in many places in the Bengal region. What did this temple look like? You can see in the next picture.



What did Gokul Medh look like? This is how the temple of Gokul Medh was as imagined by Sajid Bin Doja and Farhana Nazim Chowdhury.

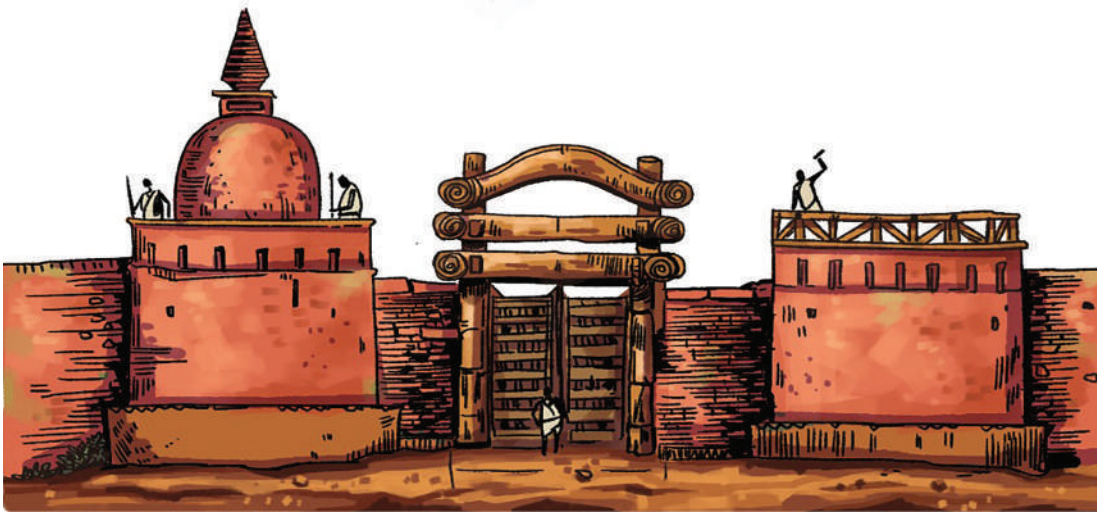
Cowrie (Kori)

In the picture, you will see the complete uncut kori on one side, and on another side there is the kori which is cut. This cowrie was a medium of transaction approximately during 16th to 17th centuries in Bengal region. During the regional expansion of empires, cowrie was a notable currency in northwestern and southern part of Bangladesh. Metal currency was used side by side with cowrie in southeastern and eastern part in Samatat and Harikel regions. You may feel surprised hearing that this cowrie still has importance in our language. You may have read the word kapardakheen in Bangla (meaning destitute or a person who possesses nothing). This kapardak means kori. Then, you may have read কড়ি দিয়ে কিনলাম ('I have bought this with a kori') and কানা কড়িরও দাম নাই ('I have no value, even though a cowrie has some value'). This idioms and phrases are still used in Bangla language. Though we do not use cowrie as currency anymore, symbolically cowrie represents one's wealth or people still use it to convey the meaning of wealth. If a cowrie is damaged or cut, that means, it has no value. In written scripts of that time, we have found many other types of currencies as well. However, we have not found any physical existence of these other currency forms. You will be surprised to know that this cowrie is a species of sea snail. These were found in the Maldives. At that time, rice was exported to the Maldives from Bengal and the cowrie was imported from the Maldives. Cowrie was not only used as a currency in Bengal but it was also exported to South-East Asia, the Mediterranean and many regions of Africa. At that time, the cowrie truly possessed a lot of value.

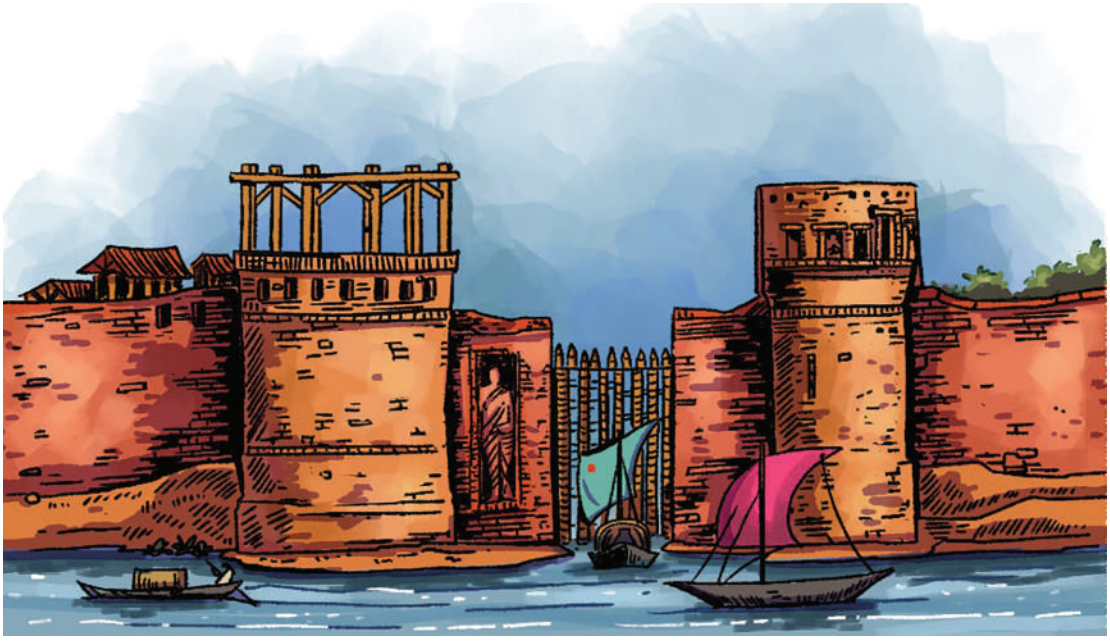


At that time, city centres were surrounded by walls. The surrounding walls were made to protect the city from the attack of the enemies and the aristocrats wanted to control the movement of the outsiders. Another reason was to protect the city from floods. In the Indian subcontinent, the high city walls were made of stones. Sometimes, there were multiple walls. Usually, they were made of mud and bricks. In Bangladesh, most walls were either made of mud or brick. At different times, these walls had gone through renovation. These wall's upper portions were usually wide and they were supported by circular pillars. The soldiers stood over the circular pillars and used it as a pavement for their work. It worked like a watchtower and if anyone tried to attack, they could obstruct them with bows and arrows, spears, or using other weapons. In the middle age, canons were installed over those circular pillars. Beside Karotoya river, the imaginary picture of these walls has been sketched by the architects. [Source: Based on Sajid-bin-doza and Farhana Nazim Chowdhury's drawings.]

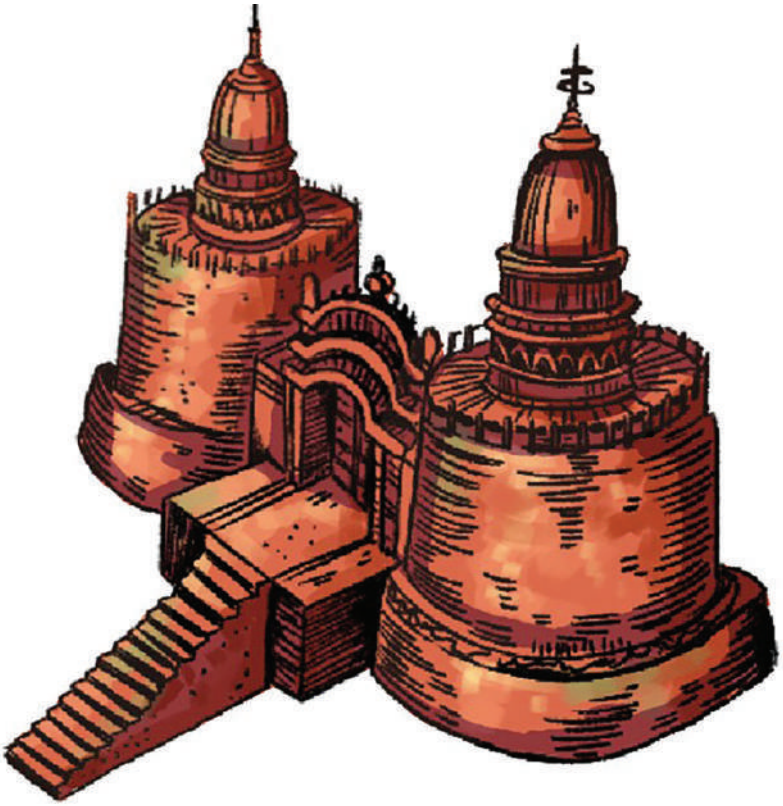
Mahasthan and Karatoya had an inseparable relation. Pundranagar was developed centering the Karatoya river. Without the Karatoya, the city could not develop. It could not sustain as a city without this river. Can you say why this city centre was closely connected to the Karatoya river? Even in the present-day Bangladesh, most cities, haats and bazaars are located near riverbanks. Our rivers do not sustain water like before. However, the old haats and bazaars are located on the riverbanks. The rivers have changed their course and consequently the settlements also moved following the river course. Nowadays, people move by roads a lot. In the past, the rivers were full with water throughout the year and they were used for business transport, irrigation and communication. We live because the blood circulates through our veins. Similarly, rivers and rainwater help the people of Bangladesh, agriculture and communication to survive over the years. Without river-centredness and river-dependence, it was almost impossible to develop human settlements in Bangladesh, and it is difficult even today. [The picture is imaginary. Source: Based on Sajid-bin-doza's drawings.]



The surrounding wall is now damaged in Pundranagar. However, the lower parts of the damaged entrance gate have been found. How did the entrance gate look like in the past? You can assume it seeing the above picture. [Source: Based on Sajid-bin-doza's drawings.]

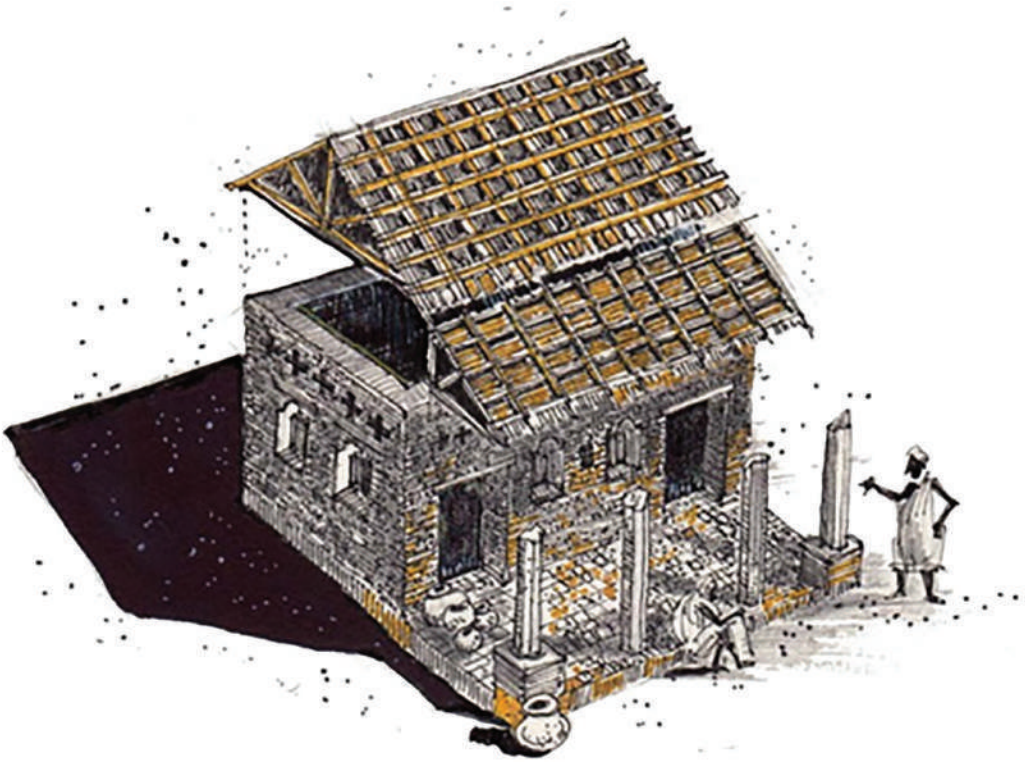


Entrance gate was there for boats and ships to enter Pundranagar following the course of the Karatoya. An imaginary picture of the entrance gate. [Source: Based on Sajid-bin-doza's drawings.]



Imaginary picture of the life and settlements outside Mahasthangarh. [Source: Based on Sajid-bin-doza's drawings.]

In what type of houses did Mahasthan's people live? [Source: Based on Sajid-bin-doza's drawings.]



What type of house did the people of Pundranagar live in? [Source: Sajid-bin-doza's imaginary painting.]

We have seen pictures and models of many ancient architectural structures so far. In this chapter, we are going to see pictures of many archaeological places also. You may visit an ancient architecture/archaeological place with your mother, father, teacher or any elder person of your family and then write a report about your visit in a travel diary.

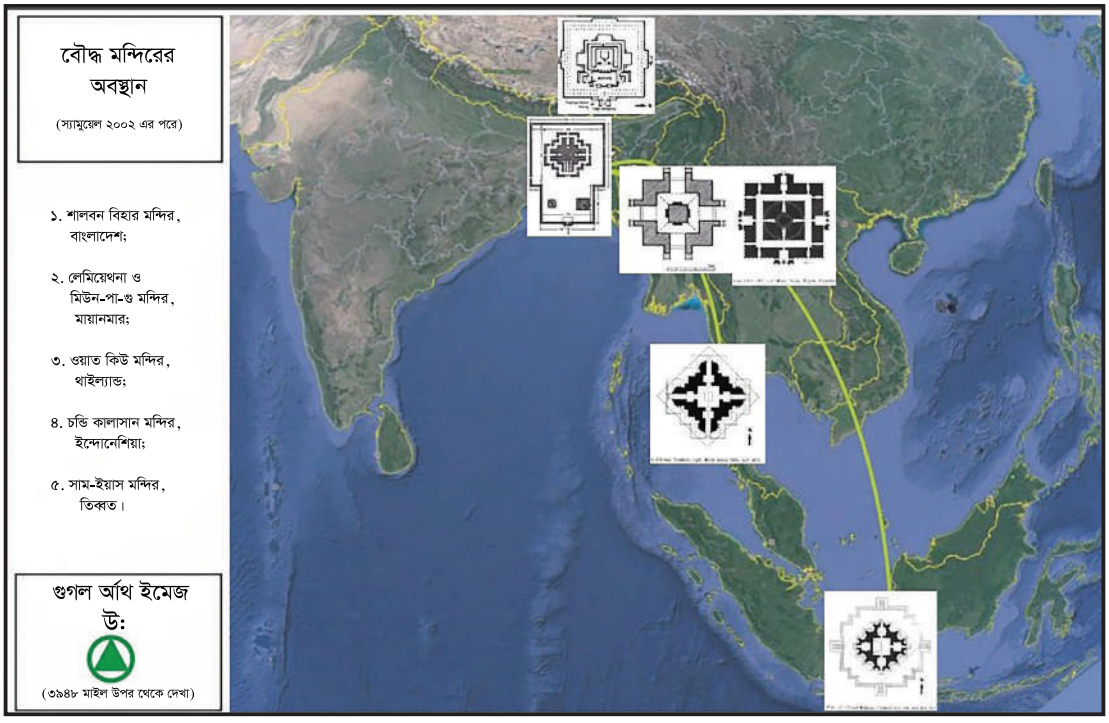
A temple at the archaeological site of Ranir Banglo

Shalban Vihara

Latikot Vihara

Rupban Mura

Charpatra Mura



Buddhist temples' architectural pattern of Bengal influenced the architectural patterns of the South and the South-East Asian Buddhist and Hindu temples. The structure and shape of Lalmai-Mainamati's Shalban Vihara, Ananda Vihara, and some other Buddhist temples had a huge impact on architectural patterns of these regions. On this map, such kind of places, picture of such temples and their locations have been marked.

Bagan, an ancient city in Myanmar

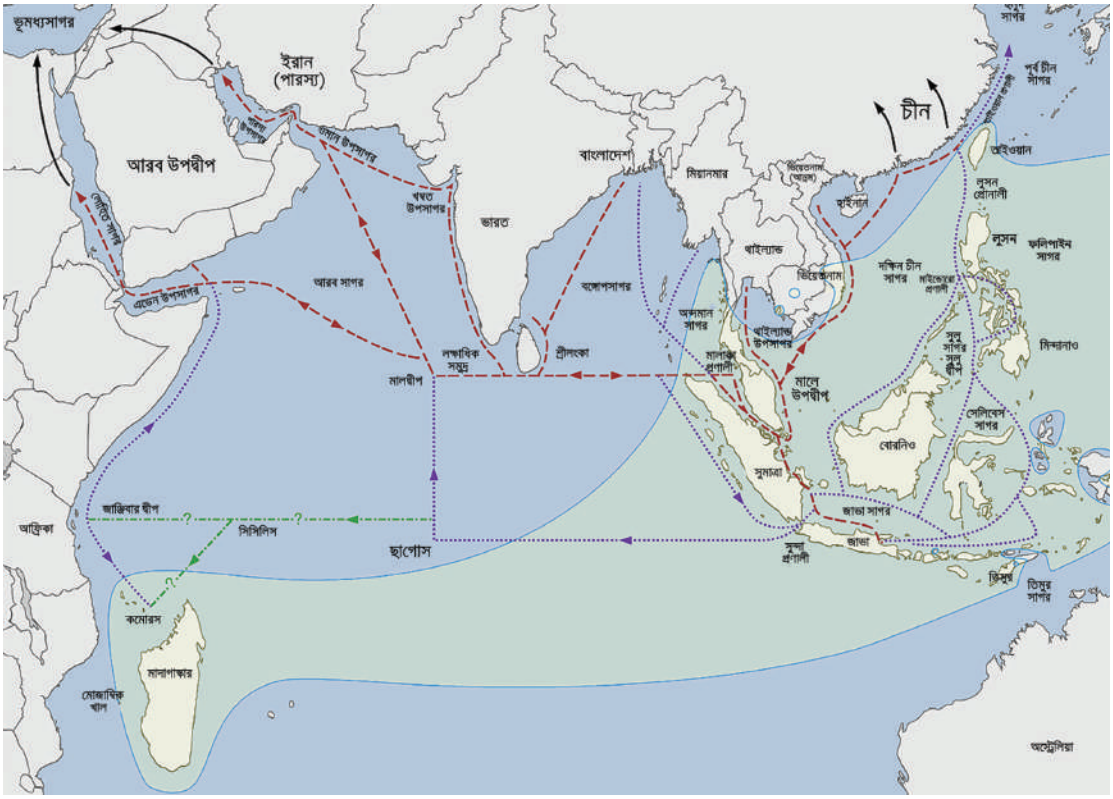
Pyu, Myanmar

Java, Indonesia

Thailand

Buddhist temple in Tibet

Similarity between the looks of Harikela coins or coins used at southeastern part of Bangladesh and those prevalent in Arakan can be seen here. Besides cowries, coins were also in use in these regions.



The sea routes and their extent for trade and communication with various countries networked through the Indian Ocean, Bay of Bengal and China Sea.

In that period, throughout the Indian subcontinent, many new city centres developed. Many cities and trade centres built during the second urbanisation lost their importance. Some cities started to get more importance. New cities and trade centres were built. The river transport system played a significant role in the development of the cities and settlements in Bengal. Mahasthangarh or ancient Pundranagar grew beside the river Karatoya, and Bangarh or Kotibarsha developed beside the river Punarvaba. Vitargar or Dharmapala King's Garh and other settlements with boundary walls were established beside the riverbanks. The rise of new cities meant the expansion of agriculture. Due to the surplus agricultural products, it was possible to attract the people of different professions in the city who were not directly connected with farming. Those people could meet the minimum requirements of survival including food. For the establishment of large buildings and various settlements including religious architecture, people of various professions including artisans, architects, workers, sailors, tanners, weavers needed supply of food. There were also many other manufacturers and representatives of the feudal class. Surplus agricultural products were used to guarantee the food supply of all these people.

Manuscript of Charyapada written on palm leaves.

Charyapada is a collection of poems written by various poets. The manuscript was discovered by Haraprasad Shastri. The followers of Sahajia practice of Buddhism during that time wrote these. Bangla, Assamese and Odia developed from this same language of Charyapada. In these poems, the writers did not directly say about a particular topic but rather followed a way of the indirect message. That is why this language is called 'Sandhya bhasha' too. These verses were written during the 8th to 12th century CE. These verses tell us about the life and society of the eastern part of India including Bengal. The poverty of the common people, class differences and simple ways of worshipping are present in these verses.

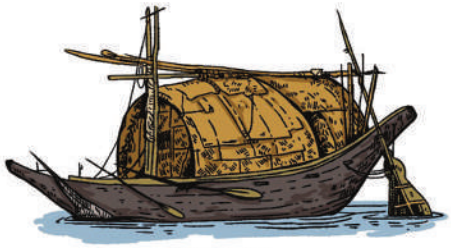
Many areas of lands were donated to Budhist Vihara, Maha Vihara and temples. Agricultural products were cultivated in these lands. These products were used to feed the Bhikkhus and hermits who stayed at the Vihara and Maha Vihara leaving their families. These were also used to carry out the expenses of day-to-day activities. Village huts, bazaars and business societies became active. Trade and business spread from local to inter-state sectors. River and land routes were used to carry goods. Besides this, many types of goods were first carried to the sea coasts to send those through sea routes.

Despite the achievements in architecture and arts, we should not forget that the general people of that time lived under poverty line and suffered a lot. Historians conducted a thorough analysis of copperplate writings (Tamralipi) and showed that the livelihood of general farmers, artisans, craftsmen, fishermen and people of other occupations was very tough. Due to the discrimination of the administrators, feudal lords, wealthy farmers and the caste system, a large number of people of the society lived under the poverty line with miseries. It is clear that the architects who built large architectural establishments at that time were not solvent. The social status of the sculptors who created sculptures from stone was not high.

Let us go and visit some neighbouring artisans, for example, blacksmith, potter, architect, jeweller, boatman, shoemaker, craftsman, farmer, etc. Then, try to know about their activities. Afterwards, write a report including drawings of their work.

At that time, metal coins and cowries were in vogue as currency in the development of trade and commerce. In the southeastern region, metal coins were used along with cowries. On the other hand, in the Barendra and Bengal regions, the use of cowrie was prevalent. From the coastal ports of Bangladesh, there were trade links with Southeast Myanmar, Thailand, Indonesia to Yunnan in China. Trade was also carried on by sea with various ports on the east coast of India.

Clothes, woods, scents, rice, salt and many kinds of products were sent from Bangla region to the regions outside. From the Maurya period, many kinds of products were sent from the present-day seaports of east coast and west coast of India to Mediterranean regions, Africa and Europe via Bangladesh and West Bengal. On the other hand, many products like spices from abroad were sent to northern India and eastern India using waterways and land routes via the ports of the Bangla region. Moreover, they were sent to various regions of Asia and Europe. Cowrie (Kori) was a popular currency in ancient Bengal and it was imported directly from the Maldives. Rice was exported to the Maldives. The trade routes, especially sea routes, spread from the Bay of Bengal to the Indian Ocean; and land routes spread from the Himalayas to the Silk Road, to Bangla, to the Assam of India, to Bhutan, to Nepal and to Tibet. You will be surprised to know that coconuts, betel nuts, salt, and the horns of rhinoceros were exported. In addition, clothes, sugar, ships, technology and many other products were transported to different parts of the world following different trade routes.



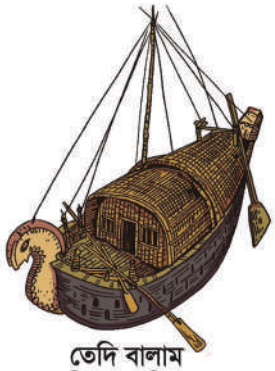
পালোয়ার

মগ নৌকা
(সুন্দরবনে প্রচলিত)

তমলুক
(লবন পরিবহনে ব্যবহৃত)

It is interesting to know that businesspersons from Bangla, India and Arabia contributed largely to the sea trades of this region. Moreover, the businesspersons of this region had

বেদি-বাশরি
(যাতায়াত ও পরিবহন)



তেদি বালাম
(বাণিজ্য, পরিবহন,
নিজস্ব ব্যবহার)

Different types of boats were sailed in the rivers, canals, and seas in Bangladesh. Many of those boats are extinct now. Nowadays, people only use different types of engine boats. Studying the history of those boats, we may know the then people's food habit, types of trades, and the types of naval routes. As a riverine country, it was impossible to live without boats in Bangladesh at that time. [Source: architecture.com]

trade relations with Southeast Asia and they contributed a lot. Their contribution was similar to that of the tradesmen of other countries like China. If we think that more business is carried out by ships, airplanes, and rails in the present-day than it was in the past, it will be a wrong idea. The artisans of Bangla and East India were famous for building large ships and boats for conducting sea trades. European merchants rarely controlled and regulated these trade routes.

Many products went to the markets of many European countries through these trade routes. The demand for Bengal silk textile was huge at that time. Various forest-grown products were sent from the present-day Assam-Meghalaya region of India to various directions of the world. In this case, the trade route consisted of the Brahmaputra and Meghna rivers.

The missionaries and the followers of Buddhism at that time played a very important role in the expansion of this trade. Followers of Buddhism from South-East Asia, including China and Tibet used to visit the Buddhist Maha Vihara or Vihara located in the eastern part of India, especially the present-day Bangladesh and West Bengal. They did so to have education and to collect various Buddhist texts. In the same manner, many people from this region used to visit different regions including Tibet and China.

Image of an ocean-going ship depicted on Ajanta Cave wall painting

Along with their communication, the avenues of commercial communication also opened up. Communication between rulers and merchants of different regions

The image of a ship used for sea trades carved in Borobudur temple of Indonesia

ensued. Even diplomatic relationships between rulers also began. The arrival of people from China started much earlier. You have already known about it. Two very famous Chinese travellers (who were also Buddhist scholars) were Xuan-Zang (known as Hiuen-Tsang) and Yi-Jing (popularly known as Fa-Hien). The travel stories of these Buddhist scholars provide us with very important historical information about various places, cities, settlements, rivers, life and people of that time.

We have seen that the river/sea routes significantly contributed to smooth communication. Similarly, freshwater water bodies also contributed to agriculture and our day-to-day life activities. Surely, there are small water bodies/rivers/oceans around you or they were before. Try to know more about these small water bodies/rivers/oceans of your locality from the elder members of your family. You will especially try to know about how people benefitted from them in the past and for what purposes they are used now. Prepare a wall magazine with your friends about it. You may draw pictures and add a written description to them.

Associations, Assortments and New Notions: The Sultanate Period and Bengal

Dear learners, as part of your History and Social Science study, you have learned many new things. Throughout the course of your study, you came to know about many topics and information of olden days. While learning new things, you were indeed getting surprised. It is very natural to be surprised after knowing them. Even great educators and wise people, who work on history, are also surprised just like you when they read history and conduct research on history. Do you know why they get surprised? The reason is that we all live in our time, that is, in the present. When we switch from the present to reading about an incident in the past, we find no similarity with the present time. The same subject or concept meant one thing in the past and becomes different afterwards.

It is a bit tricky, isn't it? If I explain with an example, you will understand it very easily. Let me ask you a question: 'Who do you call foreigners?' You will indeed say, 'Those who have come to our country, Bangladesh, from abroad.' Your answer is absolutely correct. Think of the Sultanate period (also known as Delhi Sultanate). If anyone was asked who a foreigner was during that period, what answer could s/he give? Can you guess the answer? S/he might have said, 'A stranger who doesn't live in our village or region and who doesn't belong to our society and culture is called a foreigner.' Again, you may say that whoever comes to our country from outside of Bangladesh is a foreigner. Now, the territory you understand by the name 'Bangladesh,' has it been the same all the time? The answer is 'No'. It has not remained the same always. Bengal looked different at different times. The territory of a country may change due to political and geographical reasons. Then, the map of that country also changes with the passage of time. As we were talking about maps, let us look at a map of Bengal during the Sultanate period.

The person who draws and produces maps is called a cartographer.

Relations and thoughts also change with time. This change influences almost everything like language, vocabulary, culture, habits, lifestyles and so on. The question is: what is the relation between the change and today's lesson? Dear students, the title of today's lesson is 'Associations, Assortments and New Notions: The Sultanate Period and Bengal'. After reading the chapter title, you have probably understood that the lesson is going to discuss the relationships found among the people of Bengal during the Sultanate period, how people of one region associated with those of other regions and how through their interactions they became familiar with new notions and concepts. A large part of the discussion will cover the transformed history, culture, assortment (mixture of various ethnicities, classes etc.) and the emergence of new concepts. To clarify the concept, let us look at a map of the Sultanate period. However, at the very beginning of the lesson if we know the timespan of the Sultanate period and some related general information about the period, our discussion will be more fruitful.

What timespan is called the Sultanate period?

Friends, you have already known from Class Six History and Social Science textbook that the timespan of the Pala ad Sena dynasties belonged to the ancient age. Pala and Sena dynasties ruled till the twelfth century CE. Exactly after that, the Sultanate period began. The history of this region entered the Middle Age through the Sultanate period. Sultans ruled this subcontinent from 1204 to 1526 CE. The prime person of the Sultanate administration was called the 'Sultan'. Sultan was the supreme authority of that period. For the first time in the history of this region, the 'central administrative system' was introduced during the Sultanate period.

The timespan of Sultanate Period

Rise in 1204 CE — Fall in 1526 CE

Central Administration System

One question indeed may come to your mind: 'What is a central administrative system?' This is a very simple topic. For example, we are the citizens of Bangladesh. Everything in this country is administered from the centre, Dhaka. There prevails a government system in Dhaka. The Government has a cabinet of Ministers, a legislative wing, an executive wing and an administrative system. Besides, there are other government organs and organizations. The entire country's law and order issues, administrative issues and judicial issues are controlled from the centre, i.e., Dhaka. This is called a central administrative system. However, it was not like this in the past. In earlier times, each region was ruled by one person. Those rulers used to rule their territories in their own ways. It was during the Sultanate period that an empire was built uniting several regions for the first time. Moreover, it was ruled from the imperial centre i.e. Delhi. That is why it is said that the Sultanate period first introduced the 'central administrative system'.

Features of Sultanate administrative system

You know from your previous study that before the Sultanate period, Pala and Sena rulers lived in this region. But the sultans were Muslims. As a result, when the new rulers took charge, they completely changed the existing laws and legislative system. During this period, the state was run by laws following the shariat. However, the administrative system was not at all religious in form. As the greater population was non-Muslims, they did not want to follow the Sultanate rule at all times. Therefore, the sultans gave the non-Muslims freedom to observe their religious rules. Not only that, the non-Muslim subjects of the Delhi Sultanate were recognized as 'jimmi' by the Sultans. That is why during the Sultanate period, the administration had the responsibility to protect the life, property, and honor of all non-Muslim citizens.

Sultans held sovereign power. You may now wonder: 'What does 'sovereign power' mean?' Sovereign power means supreme authority. A person who holds this power is not accountable to anyone for his/her power. Everything happens according to his/her will. Everything happens the way s/he wants. They can introduce currency in their own names. This introduction of currency was seen as a symbol of sovereignty. As we are talking about coins, let us see the pictures of coins that were prevalent during the Sultanate period.

Both sides of a coin introduced at the reign of Sultan Nasiruddin Mahmud Shah during 1246-1266

Both sides of a coin introduced at the reign of Sultan Ghiyasuddin Balban during 1266-1287

Both sides of a coin introduced at the reign of Sultan Alauddin Muhammad Khilji during 1296-1316

Both sides of a coin introduced at the reign of Sultan Muhammad Bin Tughluq during 1325-1351

Interesting activities for you

Here's an interesting game for you. You may collect some coins which were prevalent in Bangladesh or other countries at different times. Collect these from the elder members of your family or from your close kith and kins. Place a white sheet of paper on the coin and press it gently, you will see an impression of the coin. Then, keep rubbing gently with a pencil over the impression of the coin. After a while, you will see that the impression of the coin under the paper is getting visible on the paper. In this way, with the help of a pencil, make impressions of both sides of the coin on a piece of paper. Write the value of the coin, the year printed on it and other information next to the impression. Then show these to your class teacher.

Sultanate administration at a glance

- Sultan is the source of all power
- Central administrative system
- The administration constituted of several divisions
- A Kazi (Judge) conducted the trials in every city
- Land tax was the main source of state revenue
- Provincial administrative system was introduced

First female administrator of the subcontinent

You may know from contemporary political history and from your own experience that several female politicians ruled the Indian subcontinent. Much before having the contemporary female politicians of today, we had our first female administrator during the Sultanate period. Her name is Razia Sultana. She was the first female Sultan ascending power during the Delhi Sultanate. She took the responsibilities of the Sultanate of Delhi from 1236 to 1240 CE after the death of her father Sultan Iltutmish. Razia Sultana was very prominent as an administrator. She usually attended darbar (the court) wearing the dress of a sultan. She was a skillful warrior and maintained the duty of commander-in-chief in the battlefields. She also introduced coins in her own name.

Both sides of a coin issued during the reign of Sultana Razia

Social system of that time according to historians and their sources

Of course, you know that people who study history and conduct research about it are called historians. In this sense, you are also little historians. One day you will surely be great historians. Becoming an established historian involves a lot of hard work. It is because a great historian uses a variety of sources to learn about the past, depending on the period and the nature of the inquiry s/he is conducting. While studying the history of the Sultanate period, you will come across various types of information from the sources used by historians. According to the research conducted by historians, although the Hindus, Muslims, Buddhists and Jaina people lived at this time, the Muslims were in a much more advantageous position. The reason for this situation has been talked about a little earlier. Can you remember the reason? Well, let me remind you the reason once again. The rulers of the Sultanate period were all Muslims and therefore Muslims were in an advantageous position over others. There were mainly two classes in the Muslim society. On the one hand, there was an elite community coming from outside, including the Afghans, Iranians, Turanians, Arabs and Turks. These foreigners considered themselves conquerors and used various titles including Sheikh, Syed, Ghazi etc. On the other hand, there were the local common people who were mostly religious converts. The aristocracy considered themselves Ashraf (the elite) and others Atraf (the low-born). There were absolutely no association, marriage, or exchange of invitations between the Ashraf and the Atraf. Even at present times, we can find such divisions. The ‘dalit’ people were considered outcasts and irrelevant members of society.

However, we know that one day you will surely change the present concept of society which is discriminatory in nature. You will not look down upon anyone or debase anyone. You should not segregate anyone based on identity, occupation, class, education, work type, clothing style, speech pattern, and one's belonging to different society or culture. You should bear in mind that the world is beautiful because of its diversity. Think about a scenario – If there were only one type of tree instead of millions of different species of trees in the world, would the world look much beautiful as it is today? Therefore, we should always look at diversity through the lens of equality. You may not observe such practices as a whole in our society today but surely a beautiful culture of embracing diversity will be introduced in our country. You will establish it with your hands.

Some interesting activities for you

Apart from the Bengali ethnic group, there are other ethnic groups in Bangladesh who are making our country more beautiful and diverse through their cultural practices. Now, think of at least five names of the ethnic groups in Bangladesh and write the name of at least one of their festivals. The first one has been done for your convenience.

The name of diversified ethnic groups in Bangladesh	The name of their festival
Marma	Sangrai

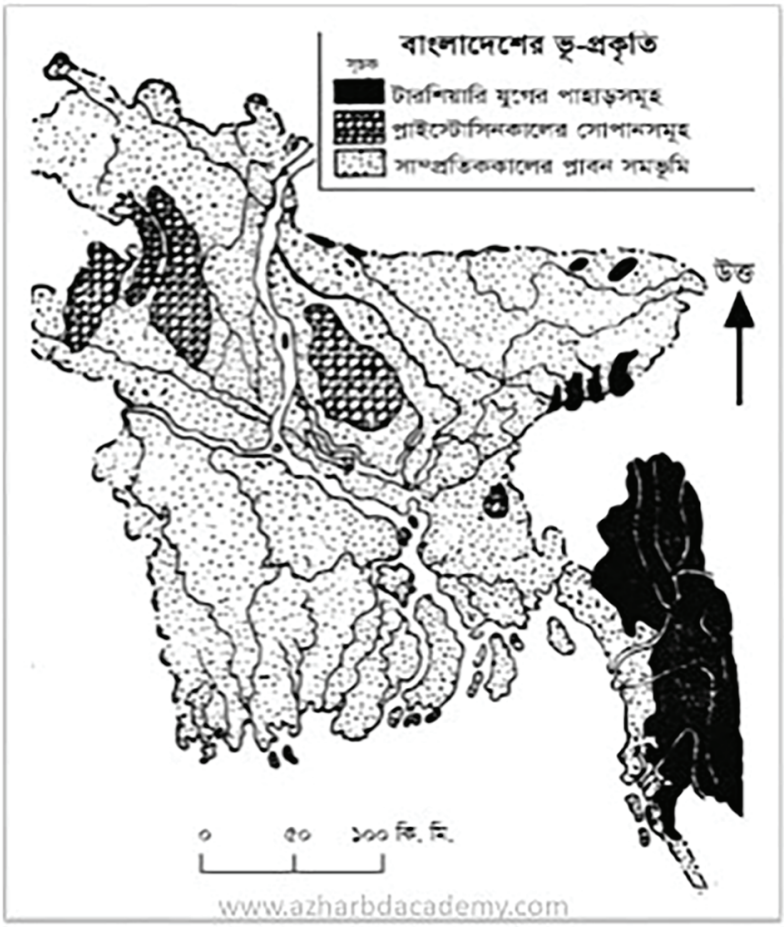
You have got some ideas about the cultural diversity of Bangladesh. However, you have already learned that landforms also play an important role in developing diversity. People's lifestyles are mostly influenced by the surrounding nature and landforms. Let us get acquainted with the variety of landforms found in Bangladesh.

Geography of Bangladesh

You know that our Bangladesh is a delta. The whole of Bangladesh is mainly flat land except some parts in the north-east and south-east of Bangladesh. Over time, different types of landforms have formed in Bangladesh.

The landforms formed at different times in Bangladesh can be divided into 3 broad categories:

1. The hills of the Tertiary age
2. The terraces of the Pleistocene period
3. The recent flood plains



Map

(1) The hills of the Tertiary age

These hills of the Tertiary age are the oldest landforms in Bangladesh. These hills were formed during the formation of the Himalayas during the Tertiary period about 2 million (20 lakh) years ago. Hills of the Tertiary period are seen in the southeastern and northeastern regions of Bangladesh. There are such hills in Rangamati, Bandarban, Khagrachari and Cox's Bazar districts in the south-east and in the East of Chattogram district. The average height of these hills is 610 meters and Tajingdong (Bijoy) the highest peak of Bangladesh is located in this region. Its height is 1231 meters.

This hilly region also lies in the northeastern part of Bangladesh including the north and northeastern parts of Sylhet, the north and north-eastern parts of Moulvibazar, the southern hills of Habiganj and the northern hills of Mymensingh and Netrakona districts. The average height of the hills here is about 244 meters. The northern hills are locally called Tila in Bangla which are of an average height of 30 to 90 meters. These hills of Tertiary period cover about 12 percent of the total land area of Bangladesh.

2) The terraces of the Pleistocene period

About 25,000 years ago, these terraces developed in Barendrabhumi (the Barind Tract) in the north-west of Bangladesh (The Barind Tract is made up of parts of Rajshahi, Bogura, Jaipurhat, Naogaon, Rangpur and Dinajpur districts. It is the largest high land of the Pleistocene age), in the middle part of Bangladesh including Madhupur and Bhawal (Madhupur in Tangail and Mymensingh districts and Bhawal in Gazipur district) and in the Lalmai area of Cumilla district. This region comprises about 8% of the total land area of Bangladesh.

(3) Recent flood plains

We know that floodwaters contain a lot of silt, and over the years, flood plains are formed by the accumulation of sediments that come with the floodwater. About 80 percent of the land in Bangladesh is plain. Moreover, as it is made of alluvium, this type of land is very fertile. The flood plains cover most of the districts of Dhaka, Tangail, Mymensingh, Jamalpur, Cumilla, Sylhet, Sunamganj, Moulvibazar and Habiganj and a small part to the east of Kishoreganj and Netrakona districts, parts of Pabna and Rajshahi districts, most of Chandpur, Cumilla and Brahmanbaria districts and some parts of Laxmipur, Noakhali, Feni and Habiganj districts. The plain consisting of parts of Jashore, Kushtia, Khulna, Faridpur, Barisal, Patuakhali and Dhaka region is called the delta plain. The coastal plain extends from Noakhali and the lower reaches of Feni river to Cox's Bazar. Tidal plain consists of Khulna and Patuakhali regions and some parts of Barguna district.

So, we see that the hills of Tertiary period, the terraces of Pleistocene period and the more recent flood plains are not the same in terms of their characteristics. Their ages of formation differ. There are differences in their processes of formation as well.

Caste system was very strict in Hindu society during the Sultanate period. You may ask what caste system is. The Hindus or followers of sanatanadharma were divided into 4 castes. These are Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras. Among them, the Brahmins were at the top. They ran worship ceremonies (puja-archana). Kshatriyas were warriors. The Vaishyas earned their living by farming and trading. Finally, the Shudras were in the lowest level of the society. They worked as blacksmiths, potters, porters, day labourers, manual scavengers (methor) etc. Shudras were treated as very inferior to the rest of Hindu society. They lived apart from everyone. No one mixed with them. Polygamy, child marriage and satidaha (widow self-immolation) were prevalent in the Hindu society at that time. When you grow a little older, you will know that after the end of the Sultanate and the Mughal periods, even during the British colonial period, such caste discrimination, polygamy, child marriage and satidaha practices were prevalent in the Hindu society. However, it was during this British colonial period when caste system, polygamy, child marriage and satidaha system gradually disappeared from the society due to the efforts of some great people among the Hindus. You may have heard the name of some of these great people. Among them, the names of Raja Ram Mohan Roy (originally Rammohun Roy) and Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar are particularly noteworthy. You just need to wait some more days to get into the higher classes in coming years – then you will come to know about all the strange stories of these great people transforming their society.

Customs of Hindu society at a glance

Caste System: System of segregation into 4 castes of Hindu society.

Polygamy: The practice of marrying more than one woman by a man.

Child marriage: At that time, the practice was to marry off girls before the age of 12. At present, this age limit is 18 years.

Satidaha: Compelling the wife to burn herself on the same funeral pyre on which her dead husband is burned.

Inhuman slavery

You may not like reading the words you are about to read now. Nevertheless, history does not deal only with the good, but it is also the task of history to give directions to the future by revealing the evil. So, you have to know this evil part of history. During the Sultanate period, slave system was prevalent at different levels of society. You may want to know what slavery is. Slavery was an inhumane system through which people (or slaves) were formally bought and sold in the market. In this system, the rich could buy a person and the purchased person became the buyer's property. As a result, the slave was bound to do any work asked by the buyer. Even during the Sultanate period, people were bought and sold through this system of slavery. Slaves lived a very inhumane life. Their will and reluctance had no value. At the end of the Sultanate and the Mughal periods, this inhumane practice was banned by law in the middle part of the British colonial rule.

Status of women during the Sultanate period

The status and admiration of women was no exception during the Sultanate period as it was in other times. Their position was much below that of men. In most cases, women were dependent on their husbands or sons. Their involvement in any other work other than child bearing and household work was not found much. However, the example of some of the wealthy women of the society practicing poetry or literature during the Sultanate period can be found. However, their number is very small. In the lower class society, women also did other jobs beside men, starting from farming in the fields to some other tasks.

Economic condition of the Sultanate period

Much is known about the social conditions of the Delhi Sultanate from the writings of some writers of that period such as Minhaj-is-Siraj, Ziauddin Barani, Shams-i-Siraj. However, to know the economic condition of the Sultanate period, nothing is available other than the accounts written by foreign tourists. You must be wondering who the tourists are and what they are.

Who are tourists?

Tourists are those who travel from one country to another to know the borders, culture, people, history, lifestyle, habits, education and other issues of different countries of the world. They travel to different parts of the world. While traveling, they observe and study the society and culture of different places, and sometimes they write those down to inform the next generation. Friends, you can also be a tourist if you want. Are you wondering how to become a tourist? They travel home and abroad. This is what you are thinking. That is not the case always. To be a tourist, there is no strict rule that you have to travel abroad. You can become a tourist living inside your country. Every year you visit different places inside the country with your family members. You can use these tours. From now on, wherever you go to visit a place, observe the language, lifestyle, culture, celebrations, festivals, entertainment and education etc. of the people of that place very well. If necessary, keep a small notebook and a pen in your pocket while traveling. Whenever you see something interesting, note it down in brief. Do not forget to write down the date and the name of the place. When you return home, write them down in a notebook. This way you will also become a tourist.

Now I am a tourist

Friends, let us do a fun activity. Write down the names of the places you have visited. Write an essay in less than one page on how you observed the language, lifestyle, cultural celebrations, festivals, entertainment and education of the people there. Then put everyone's writings side by side on a wall. That will become a tourist wall magazine. Hang the wall magazine on a wall in the school where everyone can read the magazine.

Tourist Wall Magazine

We were talking about the Sultanate period. Some details of the economic conditions of that time can be found from the writings of a few tourists who came from other countries. Among these tourists are Marco Polo, Ibn Battuta, Wasaf, Varthema and others. According to their records, the main export products of that time were agricultural produce, cloth and spices. Major agricultural products included paddy, wheat, sugarcane, pulses, coconut, mustard etc. Most of the common people depended on agriculture for their livelihood. Agriculture was generally practiced over large areas adjacent to rivers and freshwater water bodies to maximise irrigation facilities. During the Sultanate period, the cotton cloth produced here was appreciated all over the world. The fame of muslin of the Bengal region is unforgettable. Ibn Battuta praised the Bengal during the Sultanate period. According to him, the things that could be bought cheaply in Bengal could not be found anywhere else in the world. However, how many people had the ability to buy those cheap goods is not found in any tourist records. During the Sultanate period, different currencies were in circulation at different times for various types of transactions. Gold, silver and copper coins were in circulation at that time. Copper coins were called Jital. On the contrary, the common people used to make transactions using cowries. Class discrimination was too dominant in the society. On one side of the society, the wealthy people had a luxurious life; on the opposite side, people were working day and night for handfuls of food.

Mixture and innovation in architecture

The architecture, art and culture of the Sultanate period make us familiar with many new things in the history of the subcontinent. As a result of the arrival of the Sultans and the expansion of their empire, we see a remarkable development of architecture following the Indo-Islamic style. Meanwhile, a new trend began to develop by combining the architecture of Syria, Byzantine, Egypt and Iran with the local architecture of the Indian subcontinent. Cities like Kotla, Feroz Shah, Hisar Feroz, Fatehabad, Jainpur etc. were built using this style as a model. Delhi's Qutub Minar, Firoz Shah Kotla, Tughlakabad Fort, Alauddin Khilaji Madrasah, Adina Mosque at Pandua, Bagerhat's Sixty Domes Mosque, Khan Jahan Ali's Tomb, Gauda's Small Golden Mosque, Large Golden Mosque, etc. are still witnesses to the history of Sultanate period architecture.

Let us see some pictures of the architectural structures of the Sultanate period.

Sultanate architecture: Firoz Shah Kotala located in Delhi

Sultanate architecture: The Small Golden Mosque of Gauda is located at present day Chapainawabganj.

Architecture of the Sultanate period: Qutub Minar, the world's largest brick minaret located in Delhi.

Sultanate architecture: Tomb of Sultan Iltutmish

Sultanate architecture: Ghiyasuddin Tughluq's tomb located in Delhi

Sultanate architecture: Adina Mosque in Malda, West Bengal

Sultanate architecture: Tughlaqabad Fort

Sixty Domes Mosque at Bagerhat

Sixty Domes Mosque at Bagerhat is an outstanding structure of the Sultanate period in Bangladesh. Though there is no inscription on it, it is assumed from its architecture that Khan Jahan Ali built this mosque in the 15th century. In 1985, UNESCO declared this ancient mosque to be a World Heritage Site. Interestingly, the name of the mosque is Sixty Domes Mosque but it actually has 81 domes.

Sultanate architecture: famous Sixty Domes Mosque at Bagerhat

শরণার্থী: ১৯৭১

১৯৭১ সালে মুক্তিযুদ্ধ চলাকালে পাকিস্তানের সেনাবাহিনী এবং তাদের স্থানীয় দোসরদের নৃশংসতার হাত থেকে রক্ষা পেতে এদেশের মানুষ বিভিন্ন পথে শরণার্থী হিসেবে ভারতে আশ্রয় নেয়। ভারত সরকার মুক্তিযুদ্ধ চলাকালীন প্রায় ১০ মিলিয়ন (এক কোটি) শরণার্থীকে আশ্রয়, খাদ্য ও চিকিৎসা সহায়তা প্রদান করে।

Academic Year
2023

Class Seven

History and Social Science

An Inquiry-based Reader

সমৃদ্ধ বাংলাদেশ গড়ে তোলার জন্য যোগ্যতা অর্জন কর

– মাননীয় প্রধানমন্ত্রী শেখ হাসিনা

তথ্য, সেবা ও সামাজিক সমস্যা প্রতিকারের জন্য '৩৩৩' কলসেন্টারে ফোন করুন

নারী ও শিশু নির্যাতনের ঘটনা ঘটলে প্রতিকার ও প্রতিরোধের জন্য ন্যাশনাল হেল্পলাইন সেন্টারে
১০৯ নম্বর-এ (টোল ফ্রি, ২৪ ঘণ্টা সার্ভিস) ফোন করুন

Ministry of Education

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